ANNIE READ.
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ANNIE READ.

BY ADA GRAY.

It was early twilight, a December twilight, and a chill, northwest wind was drifting along freighted with snow-flakes, and bringing a shiver at every blast; but within the sitting-room at Farmer Read's a bright fire blazed warm and free, shedding its cheerful glow within, and flashing through the large windows with a welcome to those without. There was unusual bustle in the generally quiet room. Even the farmer himself, unlike his habit of sitting thoughtfully smoking in the chimney corner at nightfall, had knocked the contents of his pipe against the jamb at least a dozen times during the last half-hour, though as often he had been chipping tobacco and carefully filling it. A smiling mild-looking matron was quite as restless; first folding back the border of her cap, and smoothing the folds of her black silk apron; then, for the purpose of passing the time, carefully arranging the furniture, though it was all in perfect order before; and finally, in the intervals of peering through the window, piling fresh fuel on the already well-laden andirons; or brushing up the brick hearth, much to the discomfort of Tray, for, having just seen every cinder and bit of ashes carefully removed, and the wing hung on its nail, he rationally concluded that he might stretch himself on the rug for a comfortable nap. Tray was not sagacious enough to know that some one was expected; and that the one for whom the warm fire had been made warmer, for whom the tea-kettle was singing so merrily, and for whose coming so many anxious glances were directed from the windows, was no other a person than his master Harry, the eldest and darling son of the family, the good, clever Harry, who had been at school without one visit home for six long months.

There was another inmate in the room, a round-faced, sunny-eyed, curly-haired girl, with the dimples and smiles which are so bewitching at fifteen, nestling in her cheeks and playing round her bright lips. Once in five minutes her shadow had flitted between the fire-light and the window, and her eyes peeped from the open door, when two merry children, who had been watching at the front gate to see when the stage-coach should turn the corner, came bounding in, their eager voices striving with each other in the glad cry, "It is coming—it's coming." Tray caught the sound of bells "jingling on the frosty air," and with the rest of the household, was out of doors just as a sleigh laden with school-boys came to a standstill before the yard. One, a laughing clear-eyed boy, never thinking or caring for baggage, was out and half way to the door, before the stage man had reined up his horses. What greetings were there! And how enviably looked the less fortunate ones, who had before them a cold ride, with perhaps the prospect of a cool home, at the cheery fire-light sending its invitations through the open door, and at the dear faces overflowing with the happiness that filled their hearts. What kind words were there, and smiles, and *such* grasps of the hand! so cordial—it makes the pulses thrill to think of them, for that is the true, electric sympathy, direct from heart to heart.

"Annie, too, dear Annie," and in a trice Harry Read had dropped his mother's hand, and putting an arm around the waist of the dimpled girl, pressed a kiss on her cheek in spite of her timidity; then, holding fast the little hand, glanced from her shrinking form at the host of staring faces in the coach, as if in pride at the darling, beautiful sister by his side. So much eagerness and confusion were there in the meeting, so much curiosity and interest felt by the lookers-on, that, but for the thoughtfulness of one youth, the most quiet and sedate-looking of them all, Harry's trunks had well nigh been forgotten. All was right at last.

"Thank you, Frank; good-by, and don't forget to come down next week," called Harry. The driver cracked his whip, and the answer, if there was one, was lost.

"Who is it?" asked Harry's father, as a head popped out of the window to answer Harry's parting nod.

"My chum and best friend, Frank Trevington."

"What a heedless fellow you are, Harry, not to have asked him to stop with us. Why didn't you tell me before? But he must come back now."

In vain Harry said to his good father, who was hospitable enough to entertain a whole coach load of Harry's schoolmates: "It's no use,

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father; Frank has no less than five brothers and four sisters who are expecting him at home, and you can't persuade him to stop. At least *I* could not."

The last information was entirely lost on Mr. Read, who hallooed at the top of his voice, and back came the coach, the driver muttering something like a good-natured oath, as he carefully turned his impatient horses round a short corner, full in the blast of the storm, nearly precipitating his merry freight into a snow-bank. Frank could not stop, must be at home. Upon second thought (and doubtless he had a glimpse of Annie Read's bright face), the night was cold, and an evening ride of thirty miles not very desirable; and the welcome was so cordial, how could he do otherwise than accept the invitation? So the ceremony of alighting and unfastening trunks and putting everything in order, was once more gone through with, and five minutes more found the whole party assembled in the sitting-room. Master Harry very gravely proceeded to formally introduce the whole family to the new-comer, not excepting Annie, who gave her hand with such a sister-like grace, that Frank was more than half disposed to take a brother's privilege, and salute the cheek blushing so beautifully. Mrs. Read at first looked a little dissatisfied at the addition to the social circle, for, unlike her cordial husband, she was not inclined to have a stranger at the family reunion. There were so many questions to ask Harry, there was so much to say and hear, that Frank Trevington's company seemed quite undesirable. But the knowledge that this was Harry's best friend, the very Frank he had written so much about that all seemed to be as well acquainted as if they had been next-door neighbors, assured him of her welcome; and it was strange how soon they were on the friendliest terms imaginable. In an hour, the new guest, instead of chilling the domestic atmosphere by his presence, had won his way into the favor of every member of the household; made acquaintance with Tray; secured the good-will of the little folks, by drawing certain curious figures on their slates; praised Mrs. Read's nice butter, and fresh baked cakes, and fragrant tea, so welcome after a long, cold ride; talked politics, quite sensibly for a schoolboy, with Mr. Read; and, what was of quite as much importance, won the lasting esteem of Annie, by admiring the single velvet rose blossoming so prettily, for the season, in the window-seat. Frank's good success was partly owing to previous good-will, gained by Harry's long letters, and partly to the spirit of sociability so natural to every one of the family, to say nothing of the attractive qualities of Frank Trevington himself. All that there was winning and agreeable in his nature could not fail of being drawn forth in the pleasant social circle at Mr. Read's. He was one of those silent, reserved, thoughtful individuals whose manners and conversation never take the coloring of sunshine, except among sunshiny people; very unlike indeed was he to Harry, a care-for-naught lover of mirth, with a smile always lurking in some wrinkle of his face, disposed to look on the pleasant side of everything, and believe all the rest of the world as open-hearted as himself. He was just about the age of Harry, straight and slender, with a wealth of dark hair admirably relieving a face pale and girlishly delicate; eyes so deep, and searching, and earnest as to give a serious, intellectual expression to an else unattractive countenance; and a gentlemanly ease, an air of refinement, which a few months away from home had not given to his unpolished friend Harry.

Who would have thought that a week of dreary, wintry days could have passed so pleasantly in the old farm-house, and that without the aid of sleigh-rides, or parties, or any society except that of Farmer Read and his agreeable family? Who would have thought that so warm an acquaintance could have been formed in so short a time? or that Frank Trevington, the all-beloved and most affectionate brother, could have allowed so many days to pass before he returned to his own home, when he had been absent so many months, and a band of brothers and sisters was so anxiously expecting him? Certainly no one who did not know the genuine, mirth-loving nature of Farmer Read, the sociability of his good wife, the unfailing humor of Harry, and the witching loveliness of his sister Annie.

"It was half in the charming way that sis of yours has of passing the time pleasantly," whispered Frank Trevington to Harry, with a twinge of crimson on his girlish cheek, as if there was need of apology for his prolonged visit. But the day came at last when he *must* go. Though there were plenty of inducements to remain, the travelling and the weather did not furnish so much as a cloak under which to hide an excuse; besides, the truant began to be anxious to see the dear ones at home, only he could not help wishing that Oak Hill (so he called his residence) was at least a score of miles nearer. "And don't forget, Harry, to come down next week, it's only thirty miles, and be sure and take Annie with you. Between my five sisters

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and four brothers, to say nothing of books and a thousand ways to pass the time, school-days will come round sooner than you or I shall care to see them, Harry."

Never a troop of light-headed, careless-hearted children tripped through their summer holidays more merrily than had the trio over that vacation. Annie was so ready with merriment and fun, so absolutely opposed to everything like care or study, that the two schoolboys afterwards mutually agreed that she was the sole cause of their both being behind their classes at the commencement of the next term. "How fortunate that Harry should have so quiet and sensible a friend to tame his wild spirits," said Farmer Read, and on parting, he arranged that Frank should pass a part of every coming vacation with them, an engagement not at all necessary for a sensitive schoolboy of eighteen, where there was a sweet, sisterly girl like Annie Read, to lure him that way.

Another vacation came, a summer one, another one in winter; and Frank, in spite of the remonstrances of a troop of brothers and sisters who claimed a right of disposing of his time, found a few days to spend at the Grove, as the young people had named Harry's home, and new temptations to share weeks of his future holidays with the inmates there. The sedate, thoughtful Frank began to be almost as necessary to the happiness of the family as Master Harry himself, and Annie began to watch the lingering days which passed so slowly before their coming, with a new eagerness which she would not have cared to acknowledge.

Autumn spread her golden harvest; the leaves faded and fell; the winter's snows came and passed away; spring vanished like the sunshine of one of her own April days; swelling bud and springing green gave place to summer's breath, and blossom, and breeze, and bright skies, and with merry, leafy June came Frank and Harry. And what a happy season was that one! To the glad young friends it seemed as if everything beautiful and charming had become a thousand times more so; there was such a morning freshness lingering in all their green hearts, and such a joyous spirit breathed itself over the whole world out of doors. Frank's pale cheek caught a russet tinge in his free rambles; and a shade of habitual seriousness on his face gave place to smiles, which even his friend Harry's could not surpass. It was all in the scenery and his companions, he said, when rallied on his unusually fine spirits. Frank had for a long while been quite certain that there never was so fine a fellow as Harry Read; he was now quite as sure that not a girl could be so bewitching as Harry Read's sister; and that there was not in the world a farm which could boast of so many dells, and hills, and dingles, and romantic views, so many cool whispering groves, so many nice trout brooks, as Farmer Read's homestead. His own home at Oak Hill, that used to seem so pleasant, was not at all comparable to it. Yet that was a pretty cottage-like dwelling, with flowers without that seemed exceedingly beautiful until Annie Read's pansies and sweetbriers met his eye; and bright, living flowers within, loved as Frank had thought nobody else ever could be loved, till the rosebud of a girl at Farmer Read's stole his affections away. The house at the Grove was a quaint, old-fashioned one, set cornerwise in the midst of a clump of beech-trees, and looking as if it might have been set down there by some one in a hurry and forgotten. But how attractive the hospitable faces within made it; and what a charming guide was Annie Read to every picturesque spot which had, as if by some strong attraction, congregated itself with others on the farm! Besides loving everything beautiful as with the instinct of a refined nature, she had lived in communion with those lovely things all her life, and knew every nook and glade for miles around, as well as she knew the situation of the flower-beds and rose-bushes in her garden.

Beautiful was the young girl, beautiful in the trustful, winning, cheerful disposition that shone out from her clear eyes, and found a voice in every word. She needed no other adornments than that love which knew no suspicion, and gushed out pure and fresh from her own pure heart towards every living thing, and the wild buoyant mirth unaffected and almost unrestrained. But the free sportiveness was tamed and softened by intercourse with the Heaven-given beauty of everything around her. The impassioned spirit was humbled as a child, in the living world without; and hid away deep below human sight were chords that vibrated with the pulses of Nature's mighty heart. The streams had a magic for her; the dim pine woods a breath of music; and the little clustering wild flowers, whose every haunt she knew, had tales and lessons to tell her, deeper, better, purer than can be gained in intercourse with the world. Her cheek had caught its rich tint from wild walks, free as the birds among those fresh green hills; her eyes had stolen an earnestness from the sparkling waters, and her else tameless heart was subdued to thoughtfulness in that blessed intercourse. Yet to most was she but a child, gentle and loving, and as welcome

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to all as the soft June air that bent down in its careless play to kiss the curls on her fair young forehead. But Frank Trevington, to whom every leafy sound and summery sight were music and beauty, learned, as by intuition, the hidden wealth of the young girl's heart. Both felt, though they did not know, that delicate chords in the breast of each were attuned in perfect harmony; that, though no words were spoken, and there was yet but the unembarrassed intercourse of friends, there was a stronger, holier, and but half-developed sympathy. But no thoughts of constraint, or one fancy of what the future might be, threw one chain upon the heart-warm intercourse of the passing present.

Annie had so many times explored the wild nooks, bounded over the hills, and tracked the windings of the tiny brooks, none could be so good a guide. Frank would have chosen no other companion, could he have had his own will, and even once, when they happened to be alone, had the audacity to tell her that for his part he wished Harry would always remain at home, for a merry person like him might be found almost every day, but a face like hers was as rare as a rainbow in December. To which Annie had but the one reply: "If you are not willing to have him with us, I 'll e'en stay at home myself, Frank."

So the three were constant companions, accompanied sometimes by Tray, and, now and then, by a little brother, just young enough to be a pet, and sometimes the innocent cause of strange confusions on the part of Frank and Annie. She led them into charming dells, which the less romantic Harry had never even seen, fine retreats for study, and so secluded that they could only wonder how the few rays of sunlight that found their way in there could ever find their way out again; searched out nook-hidden wild-flowers, and made herself absolutely indispensable in their afternoon rambles. She was mischievous too, for, sometimes poising her light foot on some mossy log in the middle of a stream, she would lure them to venture across, certain that the attempt would result in nothing more unpleasant than a shoeful of clear cold water. In the long summer days, the trio of merry voices made music in the dim woods, as they threaded a winding path, up hill, down dell, along the margin of a flashing brook winding in and out between knolls where violets and winter-green peered down to see their bright faces, till the young anglers found an admirable place for trout, just where the waters were rippled and the shadows beginning to deepen. So out of the way and deep, that they had but to prepare their lines, and tip-toe lightly almost to the water's edge—when, suddenly a shower of pebbles and little twigs from Annie's hand, dropped into the stream, effectually ruined the day's sport.

The bright June days passed merrily enough; the rainy ones just as pleasant; and between visits exchanged with the young people at Mr. Trevington's vacations passed like a summer twilight. But vacations do not last forever. Sunny eighteen vanishes not more rapidly than happy school-days. Harry's collegiate course was through, and he chose an occupation and a home at no great distance from the old homestead, near enough to spare his leisure hours between Annie and a certain graceful girl at Oak Hill, quite as attractive to him as any being beyond that sweet sister could be. But Trevington, now a studious, manly youth of three-and-twenty, in attention to his chosen profession, in a distant place, found but now and then a few weeks from his study and toil, to spend in the two homes where his presence was ever so welcome. When he left the Grove, there had been whispered a cherished secret, which for a long time only two, the young law-student and bright Annie Read, knew of.

Annie scarce knew how it happened that such a warm rich gush of happiness, never felt before even in her happy heart, had given to all things around her a freshness, and a new joy, and beauty to life. One summer evening, Frank and Annie had found themselves quite alone, just in the softening twilight shadow. Nothing unusual, it is true, but just then there was a thrilling pleasure in being alone. The shadows crept softly in and played strange frolics over ceiling and floor; the light boughs of the lilac that screened the window stole in at every breeze, and swept their fragrant blossoms over her curls; the balmy air came dallying with the rose on her cheek, then flitted away to fill the apartment with its rich incense; and a new breath of incense was kindled in the young girl's heart, to be kept pure and burning on its altar forever.

It was long before there was a reunion; and months had passed before Harry Read was quite sure that his own dear Annie had allowed a dearer love and a deeper confidence than they two had shared to take her thoughts from him; or that Frank Trevington had borne away into the din of business and the cares of his studies, the priceless assurance of her affection, to keep ever as a talisman around him when he was tempted or in danger. Harry was proud of his sister and of his friend, and if he had one thought to detract from the pleasure he felt in

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the anticipated union, it was that her sportive, buoyant nature would not be rightly understood by one so sedate and reserved. He was confident that in her heart the current of feeling was not less deep because of its constant sparkling gush; but Trevington was of a disposition jealous and distrustful. So unlike, indeed, was he in this respect to the whole family of Mr. Read, who possessed in common the traits of sociability and frankness, that the good farmer, as the acquaintance became more intimate, wondered how the two young men should have happened to be such warm friends. There was a shadow, a dark, deep shadow in the character of Trevington, but which in Annie's presence was lighted up by her sunlight. Harry Read thought he could read his friend as an open book, but that one hidden thing had never been fully revealed to him. A nobler nature never existed, one more highly honorable, but for that one taint, and of that, Annie Read, of all beings the most unsuspecting, never dreamed. There was a firmness about Frank, an air of native superiority, that commanded her esteem, and a tenderness that won her affections; and long before the eventful evening, he had become to her too, too dear for her happiness and peace.

Harry Read was little inclined to trouble himself about faults in any person, especially those so dear to him; and when he began to note the increasing interest of Annie in his friend, only feared that he would not fully understand what to many might seem light-heartedness, without any strength of character, and conform his own feelings to such an ill-founded opinion.

"Frank has concluded not to leave us tomorrow," said Harry to his sister, one evening after Trevington had been spending some weeks at the Grove.

"I am glad of it," would have been Annie's natural reply, and was precisely what Harry expected, but instead she merely shook her curls over her face so quickly that, drawing his arm from hers, he brushed them gayly back, and on the crimsoning cheek read the long-hidden secret.

"Annie, dear," whispered Harry mischievously, "I fear you are too much interested in Trevington."

"Don't, Harry, don't," begged Annie.

Harry looked up archly, as if quite decided to share this, the only withheld confidence with her; "I don't like to trouble you, but, sister, I am afraid he is becoming too dear to you."

"Why, Harry, do you think that my best brother will ever lose one tithe of my affection? Do you think I can ever love you less?"

"Not that, Annie, my own dear sister, but Annie"—as he spoke he looked deep into the clear eyes which were wont to mirror every passing thought—"for your own happiness! I know how dear it is to me. You could not conceal from my eye, sister, how closely thoughts of Frank were woven all about your heart. You do not know how your brightening eye and changing cheek betray you every day; it doesn't require much penetration to see it, darling. Who would love, and keep it ever a hidden thing, must wear a brow less clear and open than yours has ever been. I would not have yours less truthful, Annie, but confess you, who never wore a disguise, that it's hard to assume one now. Don't tremble so, Annie! For your own sake, I wouldn't have your happiness destroyed by cherishing an attachment which might be unrequited. It would be unfortunate."

"Oh! Harry, don't, I entreat!" It was a moment for confidence; Harry's voice had sunk to the low earnestness of her own, and, laying her childish cheek on his shoulder, she whispered in his ear the long-locked tale.

"I might have thought so. Frank Trevington couldn't have moved so long in your atmosphere without acknowledging its influence. But noble as he is, I hadn't thought he was just the person, that is, not enough like you. He is so reserved you know, and was, before he knew you, so thoughtful and serious. Cousin Fred is more like you in light-heartedness; do you know I used to intend you for him?"

"Was that all? So you vexed me for that!" And Annie's clear sweet laugh trilled through the garden, till it almost seemed that some merry spirits nestling among the fragrant sweetbriers caught the sound and sent it back with a thousand tiny echoes.

"Not that I prefer him myself, but for a pleasant companion—"

"Oh! Harry, that shows how well you understand your sister. Fred is pleasant, to be sure, and I just like him; that's all. We were playmates so long, how could it be otherwise? Had he been like Trevington—ahem!—I might have worshipped, idolized nim—"

"As you do Frank; ha, sis? You are right, Annie."

"And Frank is so good, so superior, so all that one could wish, and your friend too," whispered Annie.

"So he is, and I love you all the better for that, if possible; he is a man in intellect, in strength of character, in real nobleness a man; what higher praise could I give? But—"

"But what, Harry?"

"Oh, nothing; don't look so anxious, Annie,'

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for, almost unconsciously to herself, Annie's face had assumed a serious wondering expression, as if it were possible for Trevington to possess any other than high qualities; "nothing, only Frank has one undesirable trait, and that is jealousy. Some philosophers tell us that it is necessary to real affection; but that we two don't believe. A truly, purely given love never demands a return; it is only the heart's homage, yielded ungrudgingly, and knows not selfishness or distrust. I am sure it is a pleasure to love a person who deserves so much, even if you do not receive so much as a thought of gratitude in return."

"Are you speaking from experience, Harry? because I am too selfish to admit that theory. You are just in sport yourself, Harry."

"Trevington certainly would question it, for in our school friendship he would not have permitted a third friend. Now do you not understand he will hardly permit you to look with a sister's affection even to me?"

Annie's bird-like voice trilled merrily again as she gayly said: "Then, I'll tease him till he rids himself of such a feeling. Cousin Fred is coming down next week, and if Frank should think of treating me so distrustfully, I shall be tempted to vex him."

"Be careful, sis; it's dangerous trifling, and, besides, Frank is so sensitive; I'll call it sensitive, for, to tell the truth, I am a little selfish myself. Cousin Fred is quite fascinating, but, if he has such an interest in this young fluttering heart, and the promise of this dear little hand, he certainly could not object to a cousinly regard."

"I couldn't displease Frank; and as for my good-hearted cousin, whom I love as a brother, he is the last person except yourself for Frank to be annoyed about; Fred is so trivial."

"But so handsome, and polished, and attractive, that, if I did not know you for a true woman, and know your good sense too good to be influenced by such things, I might be a little fearful myself. So have a care, sis, that your own feelings don't become entangled."

There was a trace of mirth and mischief dimpling Annie's sunny face as she turned away, wondering if Fred Stickney, the lively, laughing, incomparable cousin, of whose drolleries she had told Trevington so much, could, in the two years since she had seen him, have become so attractive as Harry had represented; and wondering still more at the possibility of Frank's entertaining a suspicious, ill feeling against any one.

With the next week came Fred Stickney, a highly-bred, elegantly-dressed young man, with a countenance strikingly handsome and radiant with good humor, more merry and dashing than Harry, without half his good sense. He was on fine terms with the elderly people, having been in early life an inmate of the family till he could almost claim the rights of a son and brother, and, from the first, treated Annie with cousinly freedom. He walked and rode with her, danced and practised music, commended new books, admired her favorites, and played to admiration the part of a lady's man. Trevington saw it all, and with the ever ready suspicion and jealousy of his character, fancied the attractive cousin a dangerous rival. Annie was so warm and true in feeling, that, even to him, it would have seemed folly to think so questioningly of her, but that she was still so young, so light-hearted, so easily captivated by anything new, and Stickney was so brilliant and fascinating. He resembled her even more in person than Harry, and a careless observer would have said in disposition likewise; but only in mirthfulness and buoyancy of spirits were they at all alike. Frank understood the superficiality of his mind at once, yet, highly as he esteemed Annie's good sense and native discernment, tortured himself into a fear of what he scarce could tell. He knew how full and deep was the communion of their two hearts, and that she turned ever with a childlike trustfulness to his superior strength and firmness; he was conscious that no one understood her as he did; that no other shared her dearest thoughts so truly and unreservedly; that he alone possessed the magic key to unlock the rich treasures of her mind and heart. But now, judging her by the moodiness of his own feelings, he fancied that she found more congeniality in her more cheerful cousin; in his blindness, he had forgotten that every truly refined and delicate nature turns to its superiors, as a flower to the sunlight, gaining thereby new strength and richness. Annie Read was herself so highly gifted in taste as to fully appreciate the fine feelings and talents of Trevington, and this, in part, was the secret of her deep attachment to him; her fancy might have been dazzled by one less gifted, but her feelings interested never. Until now, Trevington had been confident in that affection; but when does a jealous nature acknowledge the influence of reason? All the slumbering gloominess which had before been concealed, was effectually aroused, until he became so silent and reserved that Annie, rallying him a little, assured him that she should be the pet, and at the same time the trouble of his life, if he persisted in treating her so unjustly. There

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was so much returning attention and such a marked delicacy in her manners towards him, that, seriously ashamed of his folly, he was becoming once more like his former self, when an unexpected call to his business summoned him away.

Some months after, when the midsummer days found him again at the Grove, the untiring Cousin Fred was still lingering there, and the whole family, including Harry, who was now at home, so happy that Trevington imagined that he was an intruder upon their social pleasures; and the lately crushed bitterness of his heart sprang up afresh. Annie was bright and bewitching as ever, without a shade on her heart or a cloud on her brow, and Fred Stickney in as gay a humor, dancing away his time like a retired man of fortune. The welcome from all was so cordial, the sweet, tearful—tearful for joy—greeting of Annie so warm and unaffected, that, but for that one all-poisoning evil in the breast of the person who should have been the happiest, the six weeks which followed might have passed without one sorrow or regret.

One afternoon, after a week of ceaseless amusements, of which all had become nearly weary, Stickney reminded Annie of a half-promise she had made, and challenged her to a horseback ride. Frank had just commenced reading some fine passages in one of their favorite volumes; and there was to her such a real pleasure in being the only listener to the clear, rich voice—so unlike any other voice she ever heard—that, consulting her own tastes, she would have remained at home; but, remembering Cousin Fred's raillery one day about her undivided attentions, she glanced a moment at him as he stood waiting her reply, tearing off leaf after leaf of a beautiful geranium, and hiding, as well as he could, a mischievous smile.

"Oh, certainly! It will be a fine time for a ride. Of course, Frank will excuse me; only don't tear my plants to pieces, Cousin Fred."

A flush passed over the face of Trevington, which Annie saw; but at the same time noticing the face of Cousin Fred overflowing with mischief, she gayly said, as he turned away—"I'll be ready in ten minutes. Will you go, Frank? Or do you prefer picking up the leaves of the plant Cousin Fred has spilt, by way of employment?"

The smile gave place to seriousness as Frank said—

"Annie, do you really think of going? Are you in earnest?"

"If you will permit, nothing is more certain," was the gay reply.

"Do as you like, without regard to *my* feelings, Annie."

Annie bent her blushing cheek low over the work in her hand, and, half irresolute, almost decided not to go; "but Frank should not be so exacting," thought she, and quietly saying: "I wish *you* would go, Frank," singing merrily as a bird, she sprang up the stairs.

"She certainly will not be so reckless," thought Trevington; but in a few moments she reappeared, ready for the ride, and, shaking her plumed cap coquettishly at him, gave her hand to Cousin Fred.

"So you do not choose to accompany us. Good-by, Frank and Harry;" and, tightening the rein of her beautiful horse, she nodded her head, and, with a gay, mocking laugh, sprang away. An expression of bitterness—it was almost contempt—knit the brow of Trevington, and curled his lip.

"She certainly is very wild to-day," observed Harry, who had, unperceived, noticed the angry flush and gathering cloud; "but Cousin Fred is so heedless, and, above all, is just foolish enough to think that you are annoyed by such trivial things; besides, Annie"—

"Annie's conduct requires no excuses," interrupted Trevington, with much dignity. "If she prefers to pass an hour with that giddy cousin of hers to devoting her time, as formerly, to me, it is quite as well; *I* certainly do not wish to control her in that."

"Pooh, Frank!"

"Annie doesn't like my seriousness. I have often thought and feared, and from this moment I am decided, that I can never be an agreeable companion for her. I certainly hardly know how to adapt myself to the whims of a variable girl."

"A variable girl! This passes even *my* patience. Frank Trevington, you have deceived us all, and wrecked the happiness of the warmest and truest of hearts. Love wasted, lavished, all to be forgotten and unheeded;" and Harry Read, in his momentary passion, smiled with a scornfulness that no one would have believed that pleasant countenance *could* assume.

"*You* are in the wrong, Harry. As the best proof of my affection, I am unwilling that she should pay so much attention to that hair-brained Stickney."

"Pardon me for my hastiness, and consider how dear she has ever been to him as a cousin, almost a sister, and do not blame her if she is ready to please him, even if it sometimes disturbs you." Harry continued, without noticing the stern, strange smile of Trevington: "She

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wishes to please every one, to make every one happy, though I acknowledge she is somewhat to blame; you are too severe, too exacting, too jealous. It is not for lack of affection (pardon those rash words of mine); were it so, could you be guilty of such deception, not all the friendship of so many years should prevent me from telling you of the bitterness, the utter contempt I should feel for the man who could trifle with *her* affections."

"Perhaps we are all wrong," was the careless rejoinder, in a tone whose meaning Harry was at a loss to comprehend.

"So we are, best friend of mine; and you are over-suspicious. She knows the shallowness of Fred's mind as well as you do. How could you fear him, generous and good-hearted it is true, but unworthy of her? And if it will satisfy you, Frank, let me betray Annie's confidence enough to tell you what she once whispered in my ear, that there is but one being who *could* be dearer than the brother she loves so tenderly; and *the* one so singled out—and her circle of acquaintances is far from small—is my best friend and ever-loved companion, Frank Trevington, whom I shall be proud and happy to call by the nearer name of brother. So, Brother Frank, smooth the wrinkles on your face, dash off that cloud that looks not a little like a coming storm, and while away the hour while Annie and Fred are gone by a game of chess."

Frank complied with the latter request; but for the former, it was impossible to remove the traces of ill feeling without, while all was dark within. How soon and how vividly, except with the few who possess the hardly-to-be-envied gift of seeming what they are not, an evil mind, or a mind ill at ease writes its legible impress upon the countenance! Frank made so many wrong moves that at last Harry, half in sport, half in a pet, swept the board with his hand, and leaving him to pick up the pieces, dryly observing that it was better to go and amuse the children in the garden than help a jealous lover pass the time, turned, whistling, away. He had hardly gone when a girlish laugh rang on the air, and Annie galloped up, checking her horse before the window long enough to say—

"I've fairly run away from Cousin Fred. I'm going in the other direction as far as the creek; but pray don't tell Harry, for he insisted on my remaining at home, so good-by again; and do excuse me, indeed you must when there is no choice, from that walk at present."

"As indifferent as I supposed; she prefers to please him. Heaven forbid that I should prevent her from being happy! But for *him*—he calculates wrongly on my brooking insults, even for the sake of one so dear as Annie Read."

He had scarcely time to turn from a gaze at her light figure, so gracefully mounted on the fine creature that seemed as awake to mirth and spirit as his beautiful rider, before Stickney made his appearance. Trevington stepped into the porch, and, speaking a few words in a low tone, which brought a crimson, angry flush to the face of the horseman, turned back, and, passing Mrs. Read, whom he met at the door, with a careless remark, sought his own apartment. It was nearly sunset when the cousins came slowly up the winding path by the pasture, Stickney looking strangely serious, and Annie fatigued with her long ride, and out of humor with herself for having treated her lover so carelessly.

"Where's Frank this evening?" she whispered to her mother, after glancing around the room, and perceiving that the family circle was not complete. "I am afraid I offended him; but Cousin Fred laughs at me so much for being so anxious to please Frank, and besides he's so particular!"

"You do trouble him by your giddiness, Annie; it is foolish in him, and equally so in you. Pray don't flirt so much with Cousin Fred; you wrong yourself, and I do not like to have Frank so displeased. He ought to be more generous, it is true!"

"It certainly was a long ride, and I'm sure I did not wish to go; but because he frowned at the thought of my devoting even an hour to Fred. I wouldn't seriously offend him; still"—

"Still, you don't think he ought to appropriate all your time to himself, as well as every *thought*. Oh, Frank *is* selfish and unreasonable!" interrupted Harry, who was near enough to hear the conversation.

There was a rich, warm glow on the cheek of Annie as she stole round, unobserved, to the window where she had left Trevington, took the volume he had been reading, and left the apartment. After substituting a light robe for the heavy riding-dress, she drew a seat to the open window, and turned over page after page, pausing, with a brightening eye and heightening color, as she read each pencilled passage. "Everything is so much more beautiful that *his* eye rests on, and all is so much dearer when *he* reads it;" and, turning a leaf, a folded note, directed merely "Annie," dropped into her hand. The rich heart-coloring which had glowed and burned on her cheek receded, as, with a strangely giddy brain, she read the words:—

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"When I saw how indifferent you were to me, I *did* fancy that I could tell you all. Of how slight consequence *my* feelings were compared to your happiness; how deeply I regretted that my presence should have been so long a weariness to you—you will understand it all without explanations. I *could* not meet you again. God bless you, Annie, in your happier lot, and forgive my greatest fault in loving you too dearly, and oh, how blindly! God bless you now and ever! We must never meet again."

"Never! never!" gasped Annie, as the paper slipped from her tremulous fingers; and lightly and helplessly she slid from her seat to the floor.

Half an hour had gone by, and yet another; the twilight shadows were beginning to deepen in the sitting-room; the children, tired of play, were leaning wearily from the open window; Mrs. Read had laid aside her work, and the farmer his newspaper, which the gathering duskiness prevented him from reading; and Harry was unusually quiet, whistling for lack of anything else to do.

"How dull you are to-night, Harry!"

"I? I am neither particularly dull nor cheerful; but I was just thinking that we need Annie's voice at this hour to keep us all in a happy mood."

"You, and Annie, and Fred are generally the life of the household."

"Where *is* Fred?" interrupted Harry.

"He strolled out in the direction of the bridge after he returned with Annie, something quite unusual for him; for generally he is not so fond of exercise or scenery as not to prefer a comfortable lounge on the sofa to a walk."

"And Frank?"

"He 's out, of course, on one of his twilight rambles."

"And, equally of course, Annie is with him," said Harry, dryly.

"No; Annie is in her room. Do go and call her, Harry; tell her I wish her to sing. Perhaps the boys will be back by that time."

Harry skipped up stairs, laughing at his mother's last expression, and, humming a snatch of a tune, stepped along to Annie's door. It was half open; and, before he could tap, he saw her, deadly pale, crouching on a low seat by the window, attempting to read from a slip of paper which she could hardly hold in her trembling fingers. He sprang to her side.

"Annie, darling, what is the matter?"

"Do read it, Harry, *do*—do! I think it must have been all a dream; indeed, I am quite sure it was!"

"But how you *do* look! Something has happened; what, Annie?"

"Read it, I entreat," faltered Annie, pressing her cold, white hand upon her throbbing brow; "it was so strange, so impossible. No, I am well, quite well now."

"Well, well!" repeated Harry. Drawing her close to him, and placing an arm around her waist to support her, he read, once to himself, and again aloud, the too, too certain words.

"What *can* it mean? I fear you have been playing a desperate game, my poor sister; and Frank is so excitable."

"Is Frederick in the house this evening?" faltered Annie.

"He 's gone in the direction of the bridge," was the reply, in slow and measured words; for a strange thought was passing through the mind of Harry Read.

"And Frank walks there almost every evening. I know it all now; do you not see how it is? Quick, Harry; do you not understand?"

"Yes; but how wild you are! Keep quiet here, and I will tell the family you are ill; don't frighten them, and I 'll know all."

"I shall, I *must* go; don't say anything against it, Harry."

"It 's too much for you, Annie; see." And he drew her before the mirror, so pale and tremulous that she could scarce support herself. "Perhaps it 's nothing, after all; you and Frank have been vexing each other with misunderstandings. He might have wished just to frighten you because you have trifled with him," said Harry, soothingly.

"Oh, he *couldn't!* He knew I meant nothing, though it was so very wrong in me to treat him so. Fold that shawl around me, and let me take your arm, for I almost fear I shall fall without it."

Harry folded the shawl around her, and, half supporting her in his arms, descended the stairs, glancing in a moment at the door of the sitting-room, observing, in as careless a tone as he could assume, that they would be back soon.

Meanwhile, Stickney, after leaving the house, had sauntered down a lane to a wild, romantic grove, where Trevington had desired him to give an explanation of his conduct. What that explanation might be, he was at no loss to know; but, well as he knew of the high-spirited manner and tone of the other, he anticipated only a long laugh as the most serious sequel to their misunderstanding. Trevington was leaning moodily against a tree, and quietly accusing Stickney of having added insults, personal and unpardonable, to an evident attempt to ingra-

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tiate himself in the affections of Annie Read, requested a suitable apology. Stickney assumed a most provoking humor, and only increased the excitement of his opponent by a strain of dry, laconic ridicule; high words followed, insults and recriminations unworthy the character of either. Taunts of bitterness on the one side drew from the other the quiet remark that Annie might choose between her friends, like the queen of a tournament on the respective claims of her champions. Trevington scanned his opponent from head to foot, and, with the indifferent observation that his own life was no longer of consequence, flung a pistol upon the turf, and desired Stickney to accept it as the best of gifts unless he was willing to maintain the character of a coward—an insult which even his nature could not brook.

One had taken his stand, and the other was deliberately examining the charge of the weapon in his hand, when there was a rustle among the branches by the path. A sudden exclamation was followed by a shower of leaves raining over the turf; and Annie Read, her cheek colorless as the dress she wore, sprang before them.

"Oh, Frank and Cousin Fred, don't, I entreat you!"

"I didn't know we were blessed with such spirited friends," said Harry Read, in a bantering tone, now that there was no longer danger from the hot-headed young men, approaching Stickney, who shrunk back, mortified at being found in such a scene; "such *friends*, who carry loaded pistols to defend their honor! Eh, Cousin Fred?"

"Oh, Frank, how *could* you think of it? And Cousin Fred! Or was it all a joke, nothing else, Frank?" And, springing to his bosom, Annie wrenched the weapon from his hand, still fearing, in her agony, of crime, she scarce knew what. There was a sudden, sharp report of a pistol, a smothered groan, an exclamation of: "God preserve her!" and Annie shrunk from the nerveless arms that had supported her upon the damp, crimsoning grass.

"Father of mercies, has my folly ended in this?" burst from the pallid lips of Trevington, as, with a blanching cheek, and staggering under the anguish of the blow, he raised the beautiful victim in his arms.

Lamps had just been lighted in the sitting-room, and the family, impatient at the long absence of the young people, were grouped around the table, when Trevington, followed by his companions, laid his senseless, bleeding burden in her father's arms.

A week after, they laid bright Annie Read under a graceful elm in a corner of the graveyard. The old homestead grew dark and desolate; Fred Stickney drowned the remembrance of his beautiful cousin in dissipation; and Harry Read bore his sad face and haunted heart into a foreign land. Six weeks from the events at the Grove, the daily city papers announced the death, by suicide, of Frank Trevington, with an eulogium upon his fine talents, and the promise he had given of eminence in his profession, closing with the brief remark, containing so often a whole unwritten tragedy, that no cause could be assigned for his late unusual depression of spirits, and the fatal act which terminated his life.

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CHRISTMAS AND ITS CUSTOMS.
White, Caroline A
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Dec 1855; 51, American Periodicals
pg. 517

CHRISTMAS AND ITS CUSTOMS.

BY CAROLINE A. WHITE.

THERE is something so congenial to human nature, so absolutely necessary to the health of mind and body, in the relaxation which festivals afford, that we do not wonder at the unwillingness which Sir Isaac Newton tells us the heathens felt to part with their holidays, on the introduction of Christianity amongst them; so that, in order to facilitate their conversion, by retaining their days of joy, Gregory, bishop of Neo Cæsarea in Pontus, instituted annual festivals to saints and martyrs, corresponding as nearly as possible in date, if not in form, with those most popular amongst the Greeks and Romans.

The type of Christmas, the most honored, joyous, and beautiful of Christian holidays, existed long before Christianity, in the Saturnalia of the ancients, which took place about the hyemal solstice.

Nearly a century had elapsed from the birth of its founder, before the followers of Christianity introduced the observance of this day in commemoration of that event; and upon the second anniversary, when great numbers of them were assembled in the church, Diocletian, the Roman emperor, who at this time kept his court at Nicomedia, ordered the doors to be fastened, and the building to be set on fire! and thus lit such a yule blaze that the brightness thereof spread throughout incipient Christendom, and the ashes of the faithful, thus scattered through the earth, seemed henceforth to have carried with them the germs of the new creed for which they suffered.

At this period, and for more than seven hundred years after, the Feast of Epiphany, Twelfth-day, or the Adoration of the kings—for so have the "wise men" of St. Matthew, the simple shepherds of St. Luke, "keeping watch over their flocks by night," been denominated—was regarded as one and the same festival; and its very name, which amongst the Pagans signified the appearance of the gods upon earth, was singularly appropriate in reference to him whom the church regarded as Divinity-made man; at present the calendar links both, by a succession of holidays extending from the 25th of December to the 6th of January.

It requires but little imagination to construe the beautiful fable of the *golden age*, which the old Roman Saturnalia commemorated, into a prophetic myth of the universal peace and good will which the divine teaching of the Nazarite was calculated to effect upon earth, and which doubtless it will effect when the spirit of His precepts guides, in its simplicity and truth, the actions of His people.

During the continuance of this antique feast, every one interchanged presents with his neighbor; their houses were decorated with evergreens and laurel; no criminal was punished; no arms taken up; the very slaves were permitted to sit at the table with their masters, in allusion to the happy equality which was supposed to have existed during the reign of Saturn; nay, banquets were sometimes made for them, at which their masters served—a custom whose shadow still lingers with us in the yule feast once common in the baronial halls of England, and not yet quite exploded from them.

We know of hospitable hearths, whose yeomen-proprietors annually preside at a supper given to their laborers, or, if this part of the business be deputed to their bailiff or foreman, at least make their appearance amongst them, to utter the old-fashioned but hearty "Much good may it do you!" and to give and receive the gratulations of the season.

A friend, whose childhood was spent in a farmhouse, tells us that, besides the customary mince-pies and plum-puddings, there was a large cake called the yule-cake, overspread with leaves and ornaments; and that on Christmas Eve an immense candle, gaily decorated, and for which a candlestick used at no other period was brought forth, was lighted, and a huge block of wood,

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called the yule *log*, laid on the fire, both of which burnt till morning.

In the meanwhile a table was spread in the kitchen, covered with pork pies, bread and cheese, elder wine, and ale; and after the family had supped on furmity, all went to bed—not to sleep, it appeared, for about midnight the village singers, with the varied instruments that formed the choir of the church, in humble imitation of the "Gloria in excelsis," that primal carol sounding by night above the sheep-folds on the plains of Bethlehem, burst forth beneath the windows, and the master of the house rose up and let them in.

It was unlucky, according to local superstition, for any but a black-headed person to enter the house first, and on these occasions the veteran of the party, who had headed the musicians on the annual recurrence of the vigil for some thirty years, always took precedence, though his hair was white as the winter snow—but then, it had once been black!

In Ireland, the custom of burning gigantic candles still prevails amongst the Catholic community on Christmas Eve, and in the north of England it is also common. Light at all times appears to have been used on occasions of festivity and rejoicing—from the rude bonfire to the wax-lit drawing-room; but in these candles we trace another remnant of the ancient type of the season's rejoicings, for it was the custom of the Romans, during the festival of the Saturnalia, to present wax candles to each other.

In the yule log, or huge block of coal, which in the North answers the same purpose, and is carefully reserved for the occasion, Brand sees the counterpart of the Midsummer fires, made within doors on account of the cold weather of the winter solstice, as those in the hot seasons were kindled in the open air.

Bede, in speaking of the observances of Christmas Eve, tells us that this was the very night observed in the land before, by the heathen Saxons. "They began their year," he says, "on the eighth of the calends of January, now our Christmas Day; and the very night before, which is now holy to us, was by them called, on account of its ceremonies, the 'mother of nights.'"

The yule log was one of these ceremonies, and seems to have been used by them as an emblem of the return of the sun.

Christianity, while clinging to these ancient customs, revised their symbolism to suit itself, and made the "feast of lights," as Christmas was primitively called in the church, a type of the Eternal; it was also said to represent the glory that illuminated the fields, and shone about the shepherds in their night-watch; and by others to refer to John the Baptist, whose advent was likened to a burning and a shining light, and to the going forth of the apostles, and to that light of the world, the Son of Man himself.

But the old leaven clung to the anniversary under its new name, and the festive spirit of the Saturnalia, rather than the fasting one enjoined by Gregory Nazianzen and the early fathers of the church, continued, and even still continues (if it does not *adorn cross-paths*) to feed the eye and delight the ear, to feast and drink, crown doors, and encourage dancing, just as in those days when the stern old father penned his exhortation on forbearance from them. Only Christianity has tempered excess with moderation, and the refinement of its teaching has softened down the fierce license of wild joy which the restoration of mercy, peace, and brotherhood to earth but for a few short days imparted to the pagans.

The burden of the angels' song for us is not for days, but to the end of time, and every year brings us more nearly to its full fruition. The same jubilant feeling, therefore, that hung the portals of the Roman houses with boughs indicative of victory and peace, that bound their brows with bacchanalian ivy, and their staffs with branches of the vine, may well deck Christian hearts and houses at this period; they read another myth in the bright evergreens than the immortal youth of the Boy-God (even their own), and in their practical translation of the angelic chorus—feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and letting in the light of intellect on those who sit in darkness, even the thick "darkness of ignorance;" for, with Olivia's Clown, we believe there is no other—do honor to no fancied retrospect, no bygone golden age, but link the present days with brighter ones to come. Herrick has left us, in his fresh and racy rhyme, a lively notion of Christmas Eve in his days:—

> "Come bring with a noise,
> My merry, merry boys,
> The Christmas log to the firing;
> While my good dame, she
> Bids ye all be free,
> And drink to your heart's desiring;
> With the last year's brand
> Light the new block, and
> For good success in his spending,
> On your psalteries play
> That sweet luck may
> Come while the log is tending.'

What a picture these lines present to us, if we

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but follow the images they represent! the laughing, boisterous group, hauling to the wide hearth the mighty block, and raising it upon the massive andirons (the Romans, by the way, burnt whole trees)! We can see the smiling face of the good dame, on hospitable cares intent, and yet not so much so as to forget the remnant of the last year's brand, which, according to the formula, was only to be burnt in the next year's yule fire; and then the filling of drinking-horns, the interchanging of good wishes, the feasting on good cheer, and, while the Christmas-log hisses and roars in the capacious chimney a chorus to their mirth, the pouring forth of such rude minstrelsy and merry songs as best befitted the season and the singers.

In many parts of Yorkshire, and other places in England, to this day, furmity (a dish made of new wheat boiled in milk) is the usual breakfast and supper on Christmas Eve. Can this custom be related to the ancient offering of a sheaf of corn to Ceres, at the Saturnalia?

It is also common to give the women who go "a gooding," as the phrase is (that is, visiting for alms the farm-houses in their vicinities), wheat for their Christmas furmity, though they sometimes collect sufficient to repay them for having it ground; and in return for this, and whatever else they may receive, they present their benefactors with sprigs of evergreens to deck their houses.

In Essex this fashion is still retained; but instead of making their circuit on St. Thomas's Day, which is elsewhere the custom, the good dames put it off until the eve of the great festival, when you may see groups of them in their well-kept red cloaks, and lace-trimmed black silk bonnets, wandering across, perchance, snow-clad fields, to the different homesteads at which they are in the habit of receiving dole.

Speaking of evergreens, by the way, reminds us of the beautiful superstition of druidical times, when, according to Dr. Chandler, the people were in the habit of dressing their houses with green boughs on the first of December, in order that the sylvan spirits might repair to them, and remain unnipped by the frosts and cold winds till the return of spring renewed the foliage of their beloved abodes.

We know that the Christmas-boughs of our own times have gentle influences—that the tenderest sympathies of human nature nestle beneath them—that round the yule log fire, the world-worn links of kindred affection are reforged, old covenants renewed, and friendships strengthened, and could almost deem this sheltering of the sylvan spirits of the past a type of the kindly gatherings and gracious feelings kept alive by this annual garlanding of our household hearths in the present.

May it long be continued amongst us, for these old-world usages are the pictorial embellishments of life's book, and have in them a wordless poetry, full of refining and happy influences.

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CHARADES IN ACTION.: Answer to Charade in the August number--Co-WARD. ...
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pg. 328

CHARADES IN ACTION.

Answer to Charade in the August number—Co-WARD.

ACT I.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MOTHER. HER CHILD. MONTHLY NURSE.
HUSBAND. LADY VISITORS.

SCENE 1.—*The street outside of Mother's house. To the right the door, with a flat-iron for knocker.*

Enter MONTHLY NURSE dressed in showy gown, with large cap and clean apron on. She points to the house, and dangles an imaginary

child in the air, to inform the audience that there has been a slight addition to the family; then taking from her pocket a white glove, she fastens it round the knocker.

Exit Monthly Nurse, dancing for joy, and still dangling child.

SCENE 2.—*Interior of Mother's bedchamber. On the sofa is seen Mother, in a white jacket and cap, nursing her child.*

Enter Monthly Nurse, leading in HUSBAND. She shows to him the CHILD, and by her actions informs him that it is exactly like him, having

got his nose, his eyes, and his mouth. The delighted Father gives Monthly Nurse a card-counter.

Enter LADY VISITORS, who rush up to Mother, and, in impassioned action, inquire after her health. Monthly Nurse shows them the Baby; they are delighted with it, and clasp their

hands in admiration. Each Lady Visitor requests to be allowed to kiss it; the delighted mother smiles, and the Monthly Nurse madly embraces the Child.

The Ladies are enchanted with the scene. Caudle is handed round and drank, and the Monthly Nurse, placing herself at the door, ushers out each Lady, who slips into her hand a supposed half-crown.

ACT II.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE DEY OF ALGIERS. CAPTIVE ENGLISH.
LADY. HER HUSBAND.
SLAVES. BRITISHERS.

SCENE.—*The Ramparts of Algiers.*

Enter the DEY OF ALGIERS, dressed in his *robes-de-chambre* of state, with a turban on his

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head. He is followed by his slaves, who arrange the ottoman for him to sit cross-legged upon, and hand him his pipe.

Enter further SLAVES, bringing with them the ENGLISH LADY, who has a veil thrown over her. The Slaves salaam, and the Dey orders them to remove the veil from their Captive; they obey him, and the Dey is visibly moved with the charms of the Lady. He rises from his seat, and paces the room; then, advancing to her, he presses his heart, and declares his passion. She repulses him haughtily. He draws

from his pocket a heavy purse, and offers it to her; but she points to her wedding-ring, and casts the purse at the feet of the tyrant.

The Dey's love is then turned to rage; and he gives a signal to his Slaves, who salaam, and bring in a cannon, made by placing the sofa-bolster on the music Canterbury.

The Slaves seize captive English Lady, and bind her to the mouth of loaded bolster. The Dey once more offers his love, and is once more refused. The signal to fire is given, when

Enter her HUSBAND at the head of a gallant band of BRITISHERS. A scuffle ensues, each Britisher engaging two Slaves in combat. The Dey is dethroned, and the English Lady is released, and rushes into the arms of her Husband.

The Britishers kneeling on prostrate Algerines.

ACT III.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

OLD LORD. HIS SON, *aged* 21. TENANTS. THEIR WIVES. SERVANTS. MUSICIANS.

SCENE.—*Park on Estate of Old Lord. In the centre is placed a table, with chairs on each side, in preparation of a feast.*

Enter TENANTS and their WIVES, gayly dressed, and carrying a flag made out of an old newspaper. They form themselves into two rows, when

Enter OLD LORD and his SON. The Tenants wave their hats in the air, and their wives curt-

sey. The Old Lord bows to them, and delivers

a short speech, constantly pointing to his Son. The Tenants again wave their hats in the air, when

Enter SERVANTS, bearing a bandbox barrel of beer, which they place on the table. Glasses are handed round, and the Old Lord, taking one, proposes the health of their young Squire.

Enter MUSICIANS, when the tenants all stand up for a dance, his Son leading off with one of their Wives.

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DOCTOR CLARKE.--A SKETCH FROM LIFE.
MRS. S C HALL
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pg. 242

DOCTOR CLARKE.—A SKETCH FROM LIFE.

BY MRS. S. C. HALL, OF LONDON.

"Doctor Clarke!"—the name was engraved on a neat small card, and accompanied by a letter of introduction from a friend in Boston; it was delivered by a sharp-looking, dusty boy, to a gentleman in his counting-house, where, in the twilight of city atmosphere, he sat with considerable composure at a desk, which to my eyes seems always heaped with a bewildered mass of letters, deeds, parcels, samples; and, if truth must be told, a scrap of poetry, or the proof-sheet of a perfected poem, might occasionally be seen, half crumpled up, as if sulky or ashamed of its company—a rose amid brambles—leading to the belief that not only was the lord of the counting-house a good man of business, but that he also cultivated an acquaintance or friendship with the Muse, who did not desert him, even amid the turmoil of London life.

To the man of business belonged the letters, deeds, parcels, and samples. The man of genius brought poetry and sundry scraps of painting within those misty walls; and it was marvellous in what excellent keeping the two extremes seemed to be with our good friend. If you looked at him when the card and letter were presented by his antipodes of a West-end page, you would have been at once struck by the (so to say) contradictory harmonies of his features—the full brow telling of—but I must come at once to "Dr. Clarke" and the letter.

"Oh, oh!" exclaimed our friend (mentally)—"another American"—he is a great admirer of America and the Americans—but love a person or a people ever so dearly, when an Englishman is at business, he does not like to be disturbed; and without rising he said, after a pause, "Show the gentleman in," looked immediately down upon the letter he had received, and consequently did not see the "grin" which distended the mouth of the dusty boy. In another moment, hearing a footstep, he looked up—up high, because in general his American visitors are very tall—and he expected to see the usual long, lean, brownish-gray man, crowned by the everlasting grim "wide-awake"—he looked *very* high—and saw nothing except the "bit" of "Poussin," or whatever he believes it to be, which hangs upon the wall; so he brought his eyes down, down, lower—yes, and *lower!* and then he saw the delicately-pencilled brim of a Paris bonnet; and then, a fair, smooth, intellectual brow; and then, such lovely blue eyes: and then and there stood "Doctor Clarke!" Our friend's annoyance at being disturbed had commenced its departure as he caught sight of the Paris bonnet; but the blue eyes caused him at once to rejoice, and, rising from his chair, he received *Doctor Clarke* with true cordiality, and extended the feeling to her brother whom she at once presented.

"Doctor Clarke" is known by repute already to many persons in England as the first of several American ladies who having studied, earnestly and diligently, the medical profession—chiefly, if not (as it ought to be) entirely, with a view of understanding and ministering to the cure of those diseases which "belong," so to say, to women and children—have become entitled to the distinction of M. D., and obtained degrees accordingly. I have never felt inclined to quarrel with nature, because I was born of the "weaker sex," nor with the laws of my country, because they persist in keeping women so much weaker than nature intended they should be. Individually I have nothing to complain of; but I know those who have been otherwise circumstanced; and, at this moment, when it is surely not too much to say, *hundreds* of strong-born men owe their *lives* to the presence and exertion of weak-born women—it ought to be a matter of consideration whether a very useful movement might not be made *here*, as well as in America, to give well-born and well-educated women opportunities of graduating in a profession, the domestic usefulness of which brings it so entirely within a woman's province and a woman's power, and opens a new door for profitable female occupation. However the public may complain of ministerial mismanagement, there was no want of management or judgment in sending forth Miss Nightingale and her faithful friends and followers to the rescue of our poor soldiers from disease and death: whether Mr. Gladstone submitted "mistakes" or not, it is not my business to inquire; but surely that was not a blunder which sent so many messengers of mercy to the East. When so much good has been done by women com

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paratively unprepared for such a task—what might not be expected from women educated to cure as well as nurse, more particularly their own sex and children, whose early years are especially under their dominion? Yet how few mothers know aught of the wonderful and beautiful structure of their children's bodies, or of their mental or spiritual organization. In all that concerns this important branch of female education, I cannot but think that woman has been kept not only *weaker*, but more *ignorant*, than nature intended her to be: but I must return to my text. "Dr. Clarke" had studied and received her degree in Boston—she had been recognized by the medical profession there, and had been taken into "consultation;" but, however it satisfied others, she was not satisfied with her own knowledge, and resolved to enlarge it; for that purpose, accompanied by her brother, she resided several months in Paris, attending lectures—in fact, "walking the hospitals." She was well received; and, finding that she was in earnest, the schools vied with each other in giving her information. The result was most satisfactory; she passed her examinations triumphantly, and carries back to her country the highest testimonials. She remained too long in Paris to give more than a couple of days to London; and, *en route* to Liverpool, called upon our city friend, who, having recovered from his astonishment at finding "Dr. Clarke" a delicate, feminine woman, "with such blue eyes!" at once forsook his letters and all belonging thereunto, and, with his usual good sense and good feeling, determined to show her everything likely to interest her peculiar mind, which it was possible to see within the brief day she could call her own. First of all, he took her to the famous old Hall of the Barber Surgeons of the city of London—the rare old hall, which enshrines probably the finest Holbein in the world, and of whose value the late Sir Robert Peel was so cognizant, that whenever a foreigner, skilled in art, visited Whitehall-place, he drove him to Barber's-hall to "see the Holbein." Perhaps the Theatre of Anatomy was even more interesting to the American lady, than the time-honored hall—picture included. It was, as I hope everybody knows, built by Inigo Jones, and for many years was the only "hall" in London where anatomical lectures were delivered. Passing from thence to "Bartholomew's," "Doctor Clarke" (who, despite her degree, prefers being called Mrs. Clarke), told, with the ingenuous frankness of a gentlewoman, how it came about that she commenced a profession over whose threshold no woman had yet ventured. She married young, but being of a thoughtful disposition, she was chilled and terrified when she remembered that, though she was soon to become a mother, she knew nothing of the requirements of infancy beyond the caps and robes in which custom decks the new-born babe. She immediately sought out such books as were likely to yield her the information she required; her desire for knowledge increased "with what it fed on;" her husband did not attempt to lead her from those studies which he had the good sense to see increased her usefulness while enlarging her mind; and by the time her infant awoke her to new joys and new anxieties, she had gained a degree of knowledge which interested her medical attendant, who encouraged his patient to persevere. She did so. But household cares and household duties had their hold upon her heart as well as upon her time, and it is a matter of question if she could have achieved her present position if her family had increased, or even remained to claim her care. It pleased God to remove both her husband and child within a short period of each other; and when the first agony was passed, and she was called upon to consider what her future course of life should be, instead of sitting down with helpless sorrow, or seeking to divert her grief by change of scene, or frivolous amusement, she roused her earnest mind to work, gathered her energies home, and set them their appointed tasks, resolved to brave the opinion of the world, in what she honestly believed to be a good cause, and prove that the art of healing was not confined to men alone.

It is, I think, greatly to the honor of the M. D.'s of Boston, that they threw no obstacle in her way—did not attempt to scout or scorn her efforts; but, after steadily observing her course, held out the right hand of fellowship to the meek-hearted but noble-minded woman who studied in their schools; and, as I have said, when they considered her duly qualified, did not question to meet her in consultation, or refuse to come when she called them in, as she herself said she did in cases which, before her visit to Europe, she had found beyond her skill.

Our friend, being a governor of "Bartholomew's," introduced the fair American to the principal men of that mighty charity; the cup of her happiness seemed full to overflowing while inspecting the wards, and hearing of the multitude of cases that found relief within its time-honored walls. She expressed grea grati

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fication upon seeing that children were mingled with women in the female wards; thus, as she truly said, diverting the women from their own sufferings, by permitting their ministering to the sufferings of childhood. She thought this much preferable to the system pursued in the hospitals at Paris, where children had separate wards. This observation proved her acquaintance with natural emotion; for women are as necessary to the happiness of children, as the presence of children is necessary to the perfect happiness of woman. There was a little infant not six months old, whose broken leg was in splints, and the female patients were trembling with sympathy around it, as if each claimed the baby as her own. Here was another argument in favor of female superintendence in cases of infant illness. No man *can* minister to an infant with a woman's tenderness. Why should woman's want of knowledge deprive her of the happiness of preserving infant life?

Our American had a full day; but she might have had a month full of such feelings, and yet much remain unseen; as connected with the sanitary movement, she ought to have visited our model lodging-houses, and our baths and wash-houses. She left London to resume her professional duties in Boston, with much regret that she could not be longer among us.

The Americans prefer Paris to London, unless they remain sufficiently long here to get over our fogs (which are really stumbling-*blocks* to them) and our reserved manners. We are not given to ask or answer questions; we are not at home with strangers; we do not like being made food for books by those who note what they have not time to understand. We are perhaps, like all sires—*a little jealous of our heirs-at-law;* and the heir-at-law is often presuming and over-anxious to step into his parent's shoes before the appointed time. So, the Americans love Paris better than our beloved, full-hearted London; and thus it was that "Doctor Clarke" chose to take a Paris rather than a London degree; she was, however, pleased to find that one of her sister-physicians had studied at Bartholomew's, and was well spoken of there.

So our fair "Doctor Clarke" is come and gone! But I do hope that her example—the example of a firm, but gentle-mannered and high-minded woman may cause some to inquire: "May I not go and do likewise?"

The most fastidious must admit that it is better for one woman to acquire the knowledge necessary to investigate and cure the diseases of hundreds of her own sex, than for those "*hundreds*" to be treated for those diseases by *medical men.* I have known several instances of females sinking into early graves, because they persisted in refusing to communicate their sufferings to a physician. I grant this may be *false* delicacy, but that does not prevent it being *fact.* I cannot feel that a study and knowledge of the wonderful and beautiful structure—which the ALLWISE created as a temple for the SOUL during its earthly pilgrimage—can do otherwise than elevate and enrich the mind. Those who would attach ideas of impurity to such study and such knowledge must indeed be deeply steeped in "trespasses:" but if a movement were made to enable women of steadfast and comprehensive minds to study the art of healing, so as to minister to the cure of those diseases more particularly incidental to their own sex and to children—while others, having less desire of knowledge, or perhaps less nerve, were rendered competent as NURSES to aid the physician's skill by their continual care—a new field would be expanded for women; new and higher interests would be created for them. Numbers who degenerate for want of an OBJECT (denied by circumstances) to lavish their care and affection upon, would become elevated by the consciousness of utility, and the power of providing for themselves; the ranks of *tattlers* and *toadies* would greatly diminish; and, without the necessity for nunnery vows, or the "Look at my dress of penitence and prayer," we should find our homes still more consecrated by intelligent and actively useful friends. Miss Nightingale happily was prepared for her noble undertaking by the time she had previously, we may say, "studied" in the Home for Decayed Gentlewomen, and, like "Doctor Clarke," having a natural taste and desire for the medical profession. But, though our hospitals spared many excellent nurses to the Crimea, how often must the ladies who formed Miss Nightingale's staff have regretted the want of that knowledge, of which, if they had possessed even a little more, they would have doubled their usefulness.

The instance of "Doctor Clarke," as we have intimated, is not solitary in the United States; her example has had many imitators there. It will be wise for ladies in England to think and inquire concerning this matter; of the many good suggestions we have received from the other side of the Atlantic this is assuredly not the least good—perhaps it is the best!

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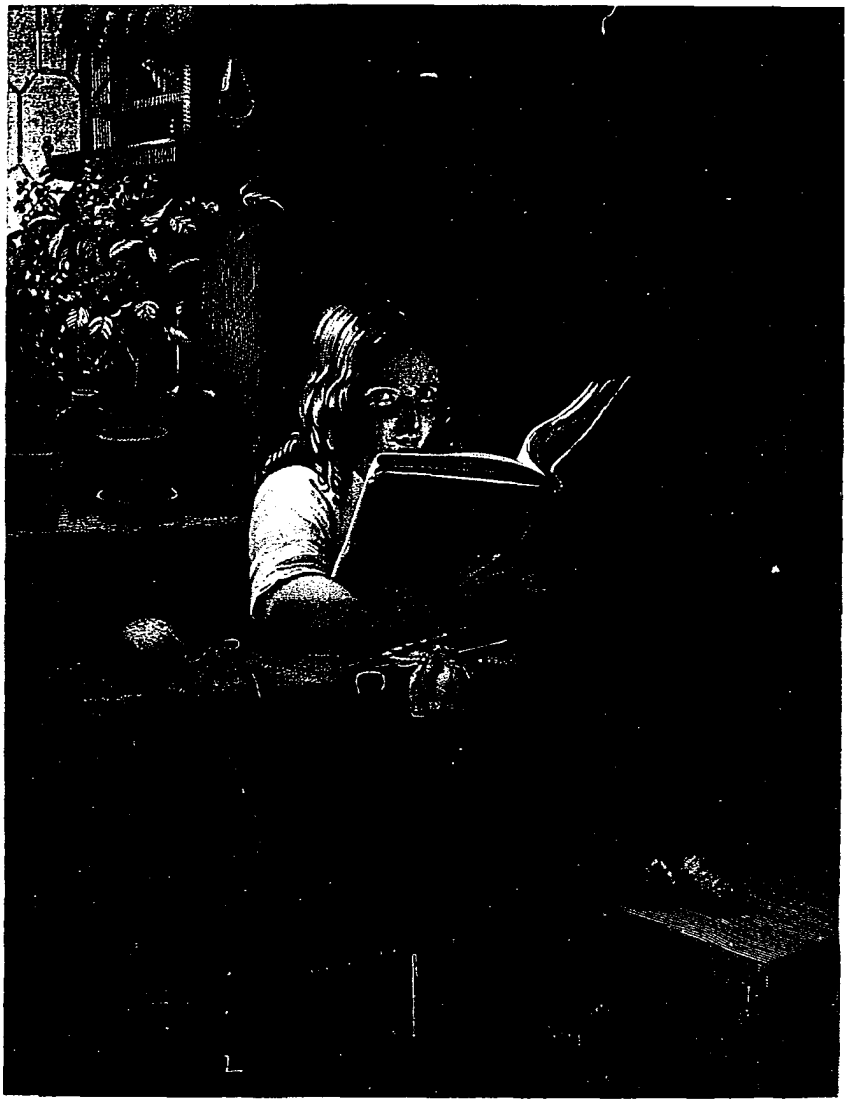
ELLEN GOODWIN; OR, A SENSE OF DUTY.
de Forrest, Virginia
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Dec 1855; 51, American Periodicals
pg. 534A



ELLEN GOODWIN; OR, A "SENSE OF DUTY."

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ELLEN GOODWIN; OR, A SENSE OF DUTY.

BY VIRGINIA DE FORREST.

(See Steel Plate.)

"ELFIE! Elfie!" cried Aunt Susan, from the kitchen window; "you little plague, come down from that cherry-tree."

"I won't touch the fruit," answered a clear, childish voice.

"But you'll break your neck. Now," she said sternly, as the little culprit stood before her, "don't you feel ashamed, you Ellen Goodwin, to be up in a tree, like a Tom boy?"

"But, auntie, I was safe enough."

"Well, you are too old to be such a romp. I don't like to punish you, child, but—"

"What makes you do it then, auntie."

"From a sense of duty; but, I forgive you now, if you promise not to get in that tree again."

The promise was given, Elfie bounded through the door, and, five minutes after, was seated on the top of the board fence, directing the movements of Jemmy the gardener.

"I declare," said Aunt Susan, to her gentle sister Mary, "that Elfie is the most contrary child I ever saw; I don't know what to do with her. I'd pack her off to school to-morrow, if it wasn't from a sense of duty."

"What sense of duty, Susan?"

"Why she'll go and get sick in those pokey hot school-rooms, and then I'll have my hands full. I'd as soon nurse a wild Indian.

"Oh, Aunt Susan!" cried the subject of the conversation, bursting into the room, "mayn't I go down to the meadow with Jemmy; they're all raking hay."

"What do *you* want in the meadow?"

"I want to go from a sense of duty, Aunt Susan."

"A what?" said her Aunt Mary."

"A sense of duty, auntie; the poor men get so tired haying, and I get them water, and run errands for them."

"You may go if you take your large hat, to keep the sun off your face."

Catching up the hat from a table, and setting it on her head by an adroit swing with the ribbon, the little gypsy shot off, and joined Jemmy.

"Now, Elfie," said Aunt Mary, the next morning, "you must stay in the house this morning, to see your cousins, when they come."

"I can see them just as well in the yard."

"I know that, but you tear and soil your clothes so much when you are in the yard, that you will not be fit to see them. You are growing a young lady now, Elfie, fourteen years old last week, and I want you to try and be more gentle and quiet."

"Yes, Aunt Mary; I will do anything for you."

"Thank you, darling; but I want you to have a higher motive than pleasing me. You must begin now to think 'how can I be most useful in the world? how can I best do my duty?' If you are quiet, gentle, and ladylike, you will win more love than you can if you are so boisterous, and you can be more useful too. Suppose I or Aunt Susan should be sick, we could hardly trust an aching head to such quicksilver handling as yours would be."

"But, Aunt Mary, aint I useful? I shell peas, and pick currants, and weed the garden, and run errands."

"All useful, I grant; but you also give Aunt Susan and me much pain and trouble, by our constant fear that you are in some danger, and by your carelessness about your clothes. Now run up stairs, and sew or read till Edgar and Horace come."

Elfie went up into her own room, and tried to be very contented in the house; she took down Dickey's cage, supplied him with fresh seed and water, and decorated the bars with chickweed; then she knitted a row or two on a stocking, but threw it on the table again, with a sigh; then she adjusted all the furniture in the room, took a longing view of the garden from the window, tried the stocking again, and finally flew up into the garret for a book. She soon came back staggering with the weight of a large Encyclopædia which she had discovered. She drew the bench up to the window, put her feet upon it, and, taking the great book, settled herself comfortably to read.

The titles or headings of the pages were the first things that caught her eye.

"'Coal,'" she read; "I don't want to read that! 'Cotton!' that's not any better! 'Commerce!' why what a stupid book!"

Elfie's eyes now wandered off, she looked out

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at the window; at the picture which hung on the wall opposite her; at the bird; everywhere, in fact, except upon the book. At that instant, Aunt Susan opened the door.

"Why, Elfie! is it possible you are sitting down reading?"

'Quite possible, Aunt Susan;" and her eyes were fastened upon the book, as if reading was the sole object of her life.

"What will happen next? What are you reading?"

"All about coal, and cotton."

"Coal and cotton! Do you like that kind of reading?"

"No, auntie, I am only reading from a sense of duty," said the gypsy, demurely.

"Well, put away the book, and get your hat and habit; you may ride down the road and meet your cousins. Jemmy is saddling Coquette."

"You will go too?"

"No, I'm busy."

"What is the reason you never go out, Aunt Susan? Do you like to stay at home all the time?"

"No; I stay at home from a sense of duty, and to take care of the house. But hurry, Elfie, Jemmy is at the gate."

Down went the book, and away flew the fairy to find her habit; and, in a few minutes, she was lifted by Jemmy into the saddle, while Coquette, her pretty pony, tossed her head, and trotted off as if proud of her precious burden, and Cloudy, Elfie's spotted spaniel, ran barking after them.

"I wonder," soliloquized the little fairy, "if my cousins will know me; they have been away three years. Coquette, my pretty Coquette, stop a moment, we will try their memories." Taking off her hat, she drew out her comb and let the back hair fall in thick curls to match those around her face; then she opened her habit, and turned back the collar, readjusted her hat, and again started. "There, that is the way I wore my hair and my collar when they were here last. Coquette, see, there they come!"

At that instant, two young men on horseback, engaged in earnest conversation, came in sight. Elfie rode up until directly in front of them, and then stopped.

"Good-morning, gentlemen," she said, gayly.

"My cousin Elfie, by all that's beautiful," cried one of them, spurring his horse to her side.

"Ellen," said the other.

"Now, gentlemen," said Elfie, "if you will accept of my escort, I shall be very happy to show you to the house."

Edgar Cameron, the first speaker, placed himself at Elfie's side, but Horace Goodwin rode behind them.

"Cousin Horace," said Elfie, looking back, "we can make room for your horse here."

"Let him alone, Elfie," said Edgar, "he is concocting his next sermon. He has preached the first two and been successful, pleased his parishioners, and all that, so now he is so furiously grave and devout, that the old Puritans were gay to him. Why, what do you think we were talking about when you met us?"

"Can't imagine."

"He was advising me to drop law and take a more active profession."

"Why?"

"Because I said it was stupid work. So it is; but I have spent too many years acquiring it, to drop it for a fancy."

"Cousin Horace," said Elfie, stopping to let him come beside her, "why should Edgar drop the law?"

"Because," said Horace, with a sweet smile at the earnest face that was raised to him, "his sphere of usefulness would be greater in a congenial profession; he cannot give his heart to his calling now, and will not do justice, I fear, to his talents."

"Don't talk about it any more now," cried Edgar. "See, Elfie! there is the farm; I challenge you to a race as far as the gate. Rein up by me. Now! one! two! three!"

The two horses shot off like arrows, but Coquette, by some mischance, did not understand racing, and, terrified by Edgar's shouts, sped far ahead and cleared the fence by a leap, throwing Elfie, who was unprepared for it, off, and dragging her a few yards by the stirrup.

Horace followed and succeeded in stopping the terrified animal, and, dismounting, raised Elfie from the ground. She was entirely unconscious. Horace carried the tiny form into the house, and laid her gently upon the sofa, while Edgar went to break the news to his aunts.

Poor little Elfie! It was many long weeks before she could leave her bed, and when she did, it was found that she was lame for life. It was a bitter, bitter sorrow, and Ellen at first murmured loudly. Cousin Horace was a good comforter, and Aunt Mary was an able assistant. Together they labored to place her sorrow before her in its true light.

"Oh, auntie!" sobbed Elfie, one afternoon, after a long conversation, "I know, I know that I needed discipline. I know it is right, or God would not have permitted it to be, and I do try hard to bear it patiently. But oh! to be a useless

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burden all my life!" and she threw her arms around her aunt's neck, and wept bitterly. These scenes were of daily occurrence, but every day they grew less violent, and she grew more cheerful.

"I will not distress them any more," she said one day to her cousin Horace, who had spoken of the pain it gave her aunts to see her so sad. "I will be happy. Not gay yet perhaps, but cheerful. I see now how wicked my repining has been, and I see that my duty is to be as cheerful and useful as is possible for one so tied down. Dear cousin, thanks to you and Aunt Mary, I feel a new meaning to a "sense of duty."

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JONES UNDER TWO ASPECTS.: JONES AT HOME--AND JONES ABROAD.
Mayhew, Horace
Home Magazine (1852-1856); Sep 1856; 8, American Periodicals
pg. 152

JONES UNDER TWO ASPECTS.

JONES AT HOME—AND JONES ABROAD.

It is strange how the same person may vary under different circumstances! Only look at Jones. The clown tumbling on the stage at Christmas, and the clown smoking his pipe at his own fireside, cannot be two more distinct personages than Jones at home and Jones abroad.

Now, Jones at home is a plain, simple, inoffensive person. His clothes are as neat and as regular as his other habits. Walking always in the quiet shade of life, he is happy if he escapes notice. He steps out carefully, at a slow, measured pace, measuring his time to the accuracy of half a minute. You never see him pushing his way roughly to the front ranks. He falls in with the others, and takes his place cheerfully where chance allots it to him. Should he push against any one, an instant apology comes gushing from his lips. His manners are as modest as his ways. He has always a hand ready to help any one over a dirty path; and, wherever there is a dangerous crossing, you see him affectionate almost in his attentions to old ladies and children. Self with him is the last person thought of. At dinner he would scorn being helped before his neighbor. If the last pear is his by right of rotation, he will resign it without a murmur, even though the person claiming it has had one already. At night, if it's raining, he will go outside the omnibus with pleasure "to oblige a lady." To the fair sex, generally, he is quite a Brompton Bayard of chivalry. Raleigh only threw his cloak down upon the ground for Queen Elizabeth to walk over; but Jones would fling himself, body, cloak, pantaloons, and all, and would take pride in his abject and moist position, if he only felt a lady's tiny foot tip-toeing it gently over his manly form. I would be bound he would not brush the mud off his clothes for many a day, but would look proudly on every dirty spot, as a glittering cross of knighthood that had been conferred upon him by some matchless Queen of Beauty! All his reproofs have the mildness of milk-and-water. As for a blow, it is doubtful if his hand, brave as it is, could twist itself into the formation of a fist. He uses it only to caress, as if mankind was some loved dog that he was fond of patting. He never treads on a person's prejudices; and as for sneers, sarcasms, or raillery, he would as soon commit to memory the irreverent songs that are popular at the Coalhole, as lend his lips to any such cutting inquiry of a person as whether his maternal parent was aware of his absence from home? Upright in all his commercial dealings as any of the great pillars on the Stock Exchange—as respectful in his demeanor as a tradesman who has "a little bill to make up"—with a heart, like a fire-engine, kept ready harnessed to fly instantly, upon the smallest alarm, to the assistance of distress—Jones is, with justice, one of the Court cards in the Brompton pack, and, without a flaw, the brightest jewel of the Crescent in which he lives!

But Jones abroad is a very different person. So different is he from the other Jones at home, you would not recognise him for the same individual. The fact is, the moment he leaves England he begins picking out, one by one, all the rose-leaves that constituted the charm and bloom of his character at home, until at last there is nothing but the green stalk left; and this he parades about with as much pride as if there was still the same blushing flower on the top of it. It is strange, but, like the Christmas clown above mentioned, no sooner does he leave his own fireside than he begins painting his face, and disfiguring himself, and tumbling and shrieking unmeaningly, and playing all sorts of absurd antics. These are partly tolerated because people think he is mad, and excuse him upon the broad, generous plea that "he is an Englishman." The poor "furrineers" imagine, because Jones is a clown amongst them, that he is a clown always, and that, in fact, the whole country is full of such clowns; nor can you be surprised at their having grown up in this geographical error, when they do see so many exhibitions of Grimaldi-ism on the part of our beloved countrymen. Jones for the time is laboring under some curious hallucination that, because he has gone abroad to enjoy himself, he must do everything that a rational creature ought not to do. His dress instantly undergoes a strange metamorphosis. From the plain, simple garb, of one sober uniform color, that he wore before, he emerges all at once into a dragon-fly of the brightest colors, that keep buzzing and flying in everybody's face. Nothing is too extravagant for his appearance; and, if he had ordered the tailor to make him a suit of clothes out of a patch-work counterpane, he would not have succeeded in putting on his body a mass of ill-associated tints more chaotically flung together. The effect is most grotesque, and the little children follow him under the cruel delusion that they are about to see conjuring tricks. Groups of countrymen collect round him in the market-place, and every time he opens his mouth expect to see fire issuing out of it, and make sure, whenever he puts his hand into his pocket, that he will pull out at least a glass globe with a number of gold-fish swimming about in it, or at all events begin unwinding off his body an interminable cable of sausages. But when they observe that he takes his hat off without as much as a pigeon flying into the air, and that he blows his nose without so much as a pack of cards falling out of his pocket-handkerchief, they leave Jones in disgust, and drop off with the firm conviction

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that Jones is an imposter. When he visits a cathedral he does not think of those whose attendance is prompted by quite another feeling than that of idle curiosity. He lounges about staring, disturbing persons in their devotions; and, should anything in the service strike him as being rather strange or ridiculous, he does not scruple to give utterance to his indignation; and, at times, I am ashamed to say, even goes so far as to laugh idiotically. I have seen him actually comb his hair during High Mass; and I have had a difficulty in believing that it could be the same exemplary Jones whose conduct at home is such a pattern for the charity children at Brompton church. I have observed with pain strangers nudge his elbow to remind him that he has forgotten to remove the cap off his head, and been shocked at his taking a sketch of some fine altarpiece before which peasants were praying on Christmas-eve. At theatres his conduct is very little better. He will talk because he cannot understand the performance himself, and laughs outright at the comical notion of people making use of such "abominable gibberish as that." He keeps disturbing his neighbors by continually going out and coming in again, and is astonished at the little willingness they show in making way for him. At tables d'hôte he loudly expresses his disgust. Nothing is good enough for him. The wines are downright vinegar. Why don't they have port, sherry, or marsala—something that a Christian can drink? The dishes are all filthy "kickshaws." He is not going to poison his stomach with them; and he calls for joints, curries, deviled bones, Irish-stews, bashawed lobsters, Welsh-rabbits, scalloped oysters, and the like; and great is his indignation when he hears that they have not got them. He is always boasting of the superior wealth of his country, and declaring publicly that England would "buy up the whole beggarly lot of them." He is always vaunting the mighty superiority of England in everything; and it is this eternal English standard, by which he will measure everything, that makes every enjoyment fall short of his expectations. He seems to carry it about with him as a rod for his own chastisement. He imagines that the Continent was made for Englishmen, and that, if the customs of a country are not in strict accordance with his English tastes and fancy, he has a right to visit his full contempt upon the inhabitants.—Thus, he is extremely facetious on frogs, and wonderfully sarcastic over sourkrout. All police-sergeants, gendarmes, and custom-house officers, he fancies he has a vested right to oppose and abuse as much as he pleases. He resents a demand to see his passport as an insult, and parts with his keys to have his trunks examined as an unwarrantable interference with the liberty of the subject, about which he has a good mind to write to Lord Palmerston. Poor Lord Palmerston! What frightful abuse does Jones make of his name! and, if only one-half of the letters that Jones, and the whole tribe of Joneses on the Continent, threaten to write to his Lordship, are ever written, we unfeignedly pity his Lordship's secretary, and hope he has a large sum allowed him for paper and sealing-wax.—But Jones is the author of all his own troubles. He stirs up the water and makes it muddy, and then complains that he cannot drink it. If he would only take things as he finds them, instead of howling and running after things that are not to be got, he would be twice as happy. If he would not grumble so much, perhaps he would be able to admire something out of England. If he would not look upon every foreigner as a cheat who wants to impose upon him, perhaps he would not so often lose his temper in the course of the day, and certainly would not be a sou the poorer by the time he went to bed. And, lastly, if he would only learn to conform to the customs of a country, and to do as the inhabitants do, instead of always expecting the inhabitants to do what he, as an Englishman, imagines they ought to do, he would not make himself so objectionable, would be treated with much greater civility, would enlarge the circle of his own enjoyments, and bring back with him to his own country far pleasanter reminiscences of his travels abroad. But, to do this, Jones must get rid of the conceit, the suspicion, the vulgarity, the narrow-mindedness, the ill-temper, and, above all, that national bulldogedness—snarling, growling, barking, attacking everybody, and opposing everything—which he fancies is always necessary to assume with different clothes the moment he lands on the Continent.

When this triumph is achieved, we shall no longer notice with sorrow the painful discrepancy there exists between JONES AT HOME and JONES ABROAD. There will be but one Jones then, and he will carry Brompton to the Boulevards, and bring back with him in return the Boulevards to Brompton.

HORACE MAYHEW.

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LETTERS LEFT AT THE PASTRY-COOK'S: BEING THE CLANDESTINE ...
Godey's Lady's Book (1848-1854); Jan 1854; American Periodicals
pg. 58

LETTERS LEFT AT THE PASTRY-COOK'S

BEING THE CLANDESTINE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN KITTY CLOVER AT SCHOOL, AND HER "DEAR, DEAR FRIEND" IN TOWN.

EDITED BY HORACE MAYHEW.

[We intend giving a selection from these "spicy" Letters, chiefly for the purpose of showing what the boarding-school system for girls is in England, and thus contrasting the course of female education in that country with our own modes of instruction. The Letters are doubtless somewhat exaggerated; but the caricature shows what the reality must be. Some of the regulations and modes of teaching are worthy of note. We should like to see the "drill and march" teaching introduced into our young ladies' schools. This part of the English Girls' School training is never neglected. They are taught to walk as sedulously as to dance.]

THE FIRST LETTER LEFT.

(*Dated February 10th.*)

SHOWING HOW KITTY WAS TAKEN TO SCHOOL BY HER "WICKED MAMMA."

Oh! my darling Eleanor, it is all over!—and yet I live; but I have strong hopes of dying before to-morrow morning. I feel that I can never exist within these hateful walls, to be a wretched slave to Mrs. Rodwell's "maternal solicitude and intellectual culture." What do I want with intellectual culture indeed? But I'm determined I won't learn a bit—not a tinny-tiny bit!

I must tell you, dearest, that, before leaving home, I cried continually for at least three weeks; but my tears made not the slightest impression on mamma's hard heart, which, I am sure, must be stone. More than this, I starved myself during the last three days—did not take one luncheon—even refused pudding; and at Mrs. St. Vitus's ball would not dance, nor touch a thing at supper. But all in vain! No one seemed to care a pin about it; and ma only appeared to take pleasure in my sufferings. The boys teased, and made cruel jokes upon my misery; and that detestable Martha helped to get me ready as cheerfully as if I—no, *she*—was going to be married. The last day I went into hysterics; and looked so ill—with my red eyes and pale cheeks—that ma, to my great joy, got frightened, and sent for Dr. Leech. But that cross old monster only dangled his bunch of big seals, and said that I should be better at Turnham-green—a little change of air would do me good! Much he knows about medicine! for, at the very moment he was talking, I felt as if I must have fainted.

So in a cold drizzling rain—will you believe it, Nelly?—I was dragged into the carriage (for pa had walked down to the office on foot, carrying his own blue bag, purposely that ma might have the carriage), and propped up on each side with bags of oranges, cakes, and goodies, to cheat me into the stupid notion, I really imagine, that I was going to have a treat, in the same way that nurse always gives Julius his powders, with lots of sugar on the top! Oh! my sweetest Eleanor, words cannot express the wretchedness of your poor friend during that long ride! And yet Oates never did drive so quickly; he seemed to be doing it on purpose—whipping the poor horse through Hyde-Park as furiously as if we were trying to catch a mail-train, instead of going at that delicious crawling pace which we have always been accustomed to by the side of the Serpentine. Opposite Lord Holland's park the horse fell. Oh, how my heart beat, to be sure! I thought he was killed at least, and that we should be obliged to return home; but no such thing. He picked himself up as quietly as you would a pin, and the carriage went on even faster than before.

But after all, Eleanor, what pained me most was mamma's and Martha's cold-hearted conversation whilst I was in a corner suffering so much! They chatted as cheerfully upon worldly nonsense as if we were going to a pantomime. I shall never forget their cutting cruelty at such a moment as that; and to make matters worse, what with crying and the rain, I felt as wet through as if I had been travelling along the submarine telegraph, besides *my tears spoiling my pretty puce-colored bonnet strings, which were quite new that day.*

At last we stopped before a large, cold-looking house, with walls pulled tight round it, like the curtains of the four-poster when pa's ill in bed. It was all windows, with bars here and there, and the plaster looked damp, and altogether it was much more like a convent than a college; for I must tell you our school isn't called a "school" (for it seems there are no schools for

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young ladies now-a-days), nor a "seminary," nor an "academy," but it's a "college." I thought I should have fainted away, only I had the cakes and oranges in my arms, and was afraid of dropping them down the area, when Mrs. Rodwell took me upon her "maternal" knee, and began stroking me down and calling me her "dear young friend," with whom she said "she should soon be on excellent terms," (only I am sure we never shall, excepting the "excellent terms" pa pays her), and she went on playing with me, Nelly, just as I have seen the great boa-constrictor, at the Zoological Gardens, cuddle and play with the poor dear little rabbit, before he devours it.

And now, dearest, mind you never mention what I am going to tell you; but all the sentiment and fine talking and writing about a mother's love is nonsense! utter nonsense! all a delightful sham!—for all the world, Nelly, like those delicious sweet *méringues* at the pastry-cook's, which look like a feast, and only melt into a mouthful! I am sure of it, Nelly, dear, or else how could they bear to make us so miserable? looking quite happy whilst our poor hearts are breaking? sending us from our natural homes, where we are so comfortable, to such miserable places as this "Princesses' College?" and especially, too, when governesses now-a-days are so plentiful, and far cheaper, I am told, than maids of all work! Why, it was only last Friday morning I showed ma the most beautiful advertisement there was in the "Morning Post," all about a governess offering to "teach English, French, German, Italian, Latin, the use of globes, dancing, *and crochet-work too*, and drawing, painting, music, singing, together with the art of making wax-flowers actually, and all for 21*l.* a year!" But ma only patted me, and said she "should be ashamed to encourage such a terrible state of things," or some such stupid stuff that put me in a passion to listen to. I am sure I shall never believe ma loves me again, after throwing me from her dear fat arms into the long thin claws of that awful Mrs. Rodwell! They opened and shut, and closed round me, Nell, exactly like a lobster's!

Before I could escape, ma and Martha were gone, and I was left alone—all alone—in this large dungeon of a place, with every door fast. Well, Nelly, you have been to school—at least I suppose you have—so you can imagine how I was allowed to remain in the schoolmistress's—no, our schoolmistress is called a "Lady Principal"—in the Lady Principal's *boudoir* to compose myself; how I was treated to weak tea and thin bread and butter with Mrs. R., and asked all the time all manner of questions that made my cheeks burn with rage, about home, and about mamma and papa, until eight o'clock came, and with it the permission to retire, as "bed would do my head good." I was too glad to get released, if it was merely to indulge my grief, and cry myself to sleep under the bedclothes!

But, law! if it was so uncomfortable in the *boudoir* (and such a *boudoir*, Nell!—a dark closet with a handful of cinders for fire, and full of gimcracks, little pincushions, lavender baskets, painted card-racks, and fire-screens, until it seemed furnished from a fancy fair)—but if that was uncomfortable, I say, it was positively wretched in the bedroom, with its six iron cramp-beds, three washing-basins, and *one looking-glass!* Yes, Nelly, only one looking-glass amongst six young ladies! I never heard of such a thing. And then the place was so, *so* very cold, that I am sure I shall have a red nose and chilblains for the remainder of my life; *but I hope, my dear, fond Nelly, you will love me all the same!*

Well, I cried myself to sleep, and it was a great comfort, I can assure you; and it seemed still in the middle of the night, when a loud ringing in my ears frightened me out of my sleep, and made me nearly fall out of bed. And, after that came a sharp, barking voice, calling out—"Now, young ladies! are you going to breakfast in bed?" and causing a general stretching, scuffling, and jumping up.

The cold glimmering dawn lighted only portions of the room, but I could see five other girls creeping about, half asleep, quarreling for basins, engaging turns at the *one* looking-glass, joking, grumbling, yawning, and laughing; whilst I, poor I, sat, hope-forlorn, shivering, half with cold, and half with fear, on the edge of the bed. There, a tall young lady, in a flannel dressing-gown, discovered me, and exclaimed: "Why, here's the New Girl! I say, my young lady, you had better make haste; the second bell will soon ring, and Miss Snapp will give you something to cry for if you're not ready."

Then they all came and stared at me (the rude things); and as I could not help crying, one of them called out, "Oh! Oh! how affecting! Oh! Oh! *Oh!* OH!" ending at last in a loud bellow, in which I joined in painful earnest; and then they left me, and went on whispering, washing, combing, and lacing each other, until "Ding, ding, ding," went the second bell; and at the first sound they all scampered away, some with their dresses still unfastened, calling after others to come and hook them for them.

I never should have got finished myself, unless

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a mild, quiet-looking woman had ventured to my assistance, and led me down stairs into the school-room, where I nearly dropped upon *feeling* the stare of some fifty girls fall upon me all in a lump, just like the water from a shower-bath after you have pulled the string. Oh, darling Nelly! what would I have given for one familiar face that I knew, or to have had your loving self by my side, so that I might have thrown my arms around your dear neck, and have a *good cry;* for I am sure that a good cry does one, frequently, much more good than a good laugh!

The buzzing, which had suddenly ceased on my appearance, began again with double vehemence, making nearly as much noise as the water, when it's running into the cistern at home. Amidst the hurried whispers, I could detect, "What a milksop!" "Mammy's darling!" "She'll soon be broken in!" &c.; when the same dog-like voice was heard to bark again, calling out above the uproar, "To your seats, young ladies! Silence! Five forfeits for the first who speaks!"

In the lull which followed, I was seated by the side of my quiet conductress, and permitted to write this letter to my dear, darling Eleanor, just to fill up my time before breakfast, after which I am to be examined and classed according to what I know.

Oh, Nelly, I do so dread this day, and am so extremely wretched, thinking, all the time, what they are doing at home, and how Martha is rejoicing that she has got her sister away from home. But I must leave off, dearest; and I will promise you several more letters (that is, of course, if I survive this day), in which I will tell you of everything that occurs in this filthy school—I mean college. That will be the only ray of pleasure, Nelly, which will shoot in this dark dungeon through the captive heart of your devoted, but wretchedly unhappy

KITTY CLOVER.

P. S.—Excuse haste and my dreadful scrawl.

P. S.—You will see I have forwarded this to the pastry-cook's in Tottenham-court-road. Do not eat too many pink tarts, dear, when you call for it.

P. S.—We hear a great deal, Nelly, about the trials and troubles of the world, and of all we have to go through, and about school being the happiest time of our lives; but they seem to do all they can to make it miserable, and I don't believe any hardship on this world is worse than going to school, and having to face fifty girls, all making fun of the New Pupil.

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LETTERS LEFT AT THE PASTRY-COOK'S:: BEING THE CLANDESTINE ...
Mayhew, Horace
Godey's Lady's Book (1848-1854); Feb 1854; 48, American Periodicals
pg. 128

LETTERS LEFT AT THE PASTRY-COOK'S:

BEING THE CLANDESTINE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN KITTY CLOVER AT SCHOOL, AND HER "DEA DEAR FRIEND" IN TOWN.

EDITED BY HORACE MAYHEW.

THE SECOND LETTER LEFT.

(Dated February 11th.)

SHOWING HOW KITTY FARED (OR SCARCELY FARED AT ALL) THE FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL, AND THE DREADFUL DISASTER THAT BEFELL HER.

Oh! my dear Nelly, I'm in such a mess, and can't think how I am to get out of it. I would run away, only I don't know where to run to: and, besides, all the doors are fast; and more than that, I feel ma would only bring me back again if I were to get away. Only think of that shabby Mrs.—— (you know whom I mean) opening all the letters; and I never knew this until my letter was in her bag. Mrs. Sharpe (who has promised to give this to some one who will drop it in the post on the sly for me) says every word we write home, and every word we receive from home, is pried into, and very often kept back if it does not exactly please the Lady Principal! A pretty lady! I wonder she isn't ashamed of herself! A nice example to set us young girls—actually teaching us to go a peeping into other persons' secrets! Meggy (that's Miss Sharpe's name) says she intends speaking to her papa about it. He is a Scotch lawyer; and she has often heard him say that there's a fine of 100*l.* for any one who breaks a seal upon trust papers! What fun it would be if we could make the Lady Principal pay 100*l.*! I'm sure it would only serve her right.

The beauty of it is, Nelly, she says she only looks at the signatures of the letters that come here, to see if they are from proper persons. This is very likely! How, then, *does she know all that is going on in the girls' homes, if she never reads their letters?* I've no patience with her! I'm sure that I shall never be able to look the mean creature in the face again.

Now, Nelly, I must tell you all about the young ladies; for I may not have another opportunity, dearest, of smuggling out a letter.

Well, then, when we went to breakfast, Mrs. Rodwell was seated on a sort of raised throne at the end of the table, and all the girls walked up to her to courtesy, and "*souhaiter le bon jour, Madame,*" and show her—this is a positive fact, dearest—their teeth and nails! Meggy told me this was to teach us to keep them sharp and in good fighting condition, as *woman's natural weapons;* but she was only laughing at me, for I learnt afterwards it was to see that they were properly cleaned every morning. But I think the practice might well be dispensed with, as not being over and above complimentary to young ladies!

When my turn came, I was preparing to show my teeth in real earnest—for I felt both indignant and ashamed of such treatment—when she took me kindly by the hand, and instantly, at that touch of kindness, my mouth shut of its own accord. She asked me how I had slept, and introduced me to Miss Plodder, who, she said, would cheer my spirits and make me feel more at home. She is such a fat, round, little sleepy, and looks as stupid, too, as she is fat! If my spirits have to wait for Miss Plodder to cheer them, I'm afraid they'll have to wait long enough.

Well, my own darling Nell knows I am not dainty, and that I should think it wicked to be fanciful over good food; but I never did see such thick slices of bread, smeared over with what they called butter. I have not been so petted at home as to quarrel at any time with my bread and butter; but, on my word, I should as soon have thought of munching a deal board, as taking up one of the long slices—planks, rather—that were piled up, as in a timber yard, before me; and yet, to see the poor hungry girls! If it had been wedding-cake, they could not have devoured it more greedily!

I thought of the dear delicious hot rolls, soaked through and through with the best Fresh (at sixteenpence a pound) that I had been in the habit of having every morning for breakfast, and sighed that I was not at home.

Meggy asked me which I liked best, "*hay or beans?*" Before I could answer that I had never tasted either, the Lady Principal inquired "if I took cocoa or coffee?" A basin of the latter was brought to me, but unless I had been told it was coffee, I'm sure I should never have guessed it. It looked more like water taken from the Regent's-canal. Meggy whispered into my ear, "Hay's best;" and seeing me puzzled, she ex-

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plained, shortly afterwards, that, in their school dictionary, hay meant cocoa, and that beans was the English for coffee, from a popular belief, which she said "was extremely well grounded" (in their coffee cups), that "those agricultural commodities formed the principal ingredients of their matutinal beverages."

Meggy Sharpe is such a nice girl, so clever, and so full of fun, and such large bright, black eyes, and a face laughing all over with mischief, it puts one in good-humor merely to look at it. I feel I shall love her very much, but not so much as you, dearest Nelly.

After breakfast, she told Miss Plodder that she would "take care of me, and introduce me to the Elders." Then bidding me not to be afraid, she led me by the hand to a group of tall young ladies, and in a set speech, delivered in a mock tone, such as I've heard my brothers imitate Mr. John Cooper in, "begged to present a humble candidate to their friendship and favor." The tallest, a Miss Noble, who seemed the head girl, and as stiff as a backboard, made me welcome, and then began questioning me in the following manner: "Did I live in London?—at the West-end, of course?—perhaps in Belgrave-square? No! then near Hyde Park? No! then in one of the squares? Yes! Well, some of the squares were still respectable. In which of the squares did I live, pray?"

I mumbled out, as well as I could, "Torrington-square."

"Oh! hem! where was Torrington-square?" continued my tormentor. "Near the city, was it not? No!—what, near Russell-square and Gower-street? Gower-street! Well, really, she knew nothing of those parts of the town."

I was next asked, "Whether my mamma went to court?"

"No," I answered, in my ignorance; "but papa does sometimes, and takes his blue bag with him when he has law business." This gave rise to shouts of laughter, and long exclamations of "Dear, dear!" whilst looks of pity were showered down upon me.

"I mean," continued Miss Noble, "her Majesty's receptions. My mamma goes to court; and I am to be presented myself by the Grand Duchess of Mechlenburgh-Sedlitz immediately on my leaving college;" and she tossed her head up to the ceiling, until I thought it would never come down again.

"How did you come last night?" resumed Miss Noble. "In the omnibus," cried out wicked Meggy, who immediately ran away.

"No; I know how she came," said another beauty, "for I was in the drawing-room at the time, and looked out of the window; she came in a clarence *with one horse*." And they all tittered again, and I felt my cheeks growing red, though why I should be ashamed of mamma's pretty clarence I don't know, even though it has but *one* horse.

I was next asked, "Whether my paternal (meaning papa, I suppose) lived at home?" "Of course," I answered; "where should he live?" "Why some people have an establishment in the city, and a family in a square. The shop (and they tittered again) must not be neglected." "Do not be rude, Miss Ogle," interrupted Miss Noble, affecting to be very serious; "personalities are extremely rude; and, besides, Miss Clover's father may not live in a shop. Tell us, dear, what profession are you in?" "I—I'm in no profession," I said, trembling lest I should be laughed at again. "Dear! what beautiful simplicity!" said the court lady, lifting her hands up; "not you—your father, child." "Oh! papa is a stockbroker." "A what? A stockbroker! Pray, what's that?" "I know," said the young lady who had told about the clarence with one horse; "it's a trade; for I hear papa talk of desiring his stockbroker to buy and sell; and I am certain, now I think of it, that they deal in *bears and ducks*." "No such thing," exclaimed a little girl with a turn-up nose; "they sell old stocks, such as bankrupts' stocks, or retiring haberdashers' stocks; they're a sort of old-clothesmen." "At any rate, they are not professional, and therefore must be in trade," decided proud Miss Noble; and they all turned away from me, with sneers and contempt. "It's no such thing," I burst out; "my papa is a gentleman—a real gentleman—and he's quite as good, if not better, than any of your papas, though you are so proud; and I sha'n't answer any more of your rude questions." "That's right," laughed Meggy; "that's the way to disappoint them. Don't tell 'em anything."

You should have heard, too, Nelly, their curiosity about my brothers, making me describe them over and over again—their eyes, whiskers, noses, and calling them by their names, Oscar, Alfred, Augustus, Henry, as if they had known them for years. The impudent girl, with the turn-up nose, actually said she felt she could madly love Oscar; and I couldn't help replying, "You need not trouble yourself, Miss; he'll never ask you." Silly thing! I'm sure Oscar wouldn't as much as look at her—not even in church.

But the greatest shame has yet to come. You can never believe what I am going to tell you, Nelly, although you know I scorn fibbing.

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Class had just broken up, when a maid came in carrying a large tray; and only imagine my confusion when I saw laid out on it all my cakes and goodies! Miss Bright (the quiet teacher who had brought me into the schoolroom) called me, and I was going to ask for permission to put them into my play-trunk, when—think of my surprise, Nelly!—if she did not actually seize *my plum-cake, and begin cutting it up into thin slices!* At first I was so shocked that I could not speak; and I was about to stop her, when she cut some large slices, and desired me "to hand them to the governesses, and then take the dish round to each young lady." I am afraid I looked vexed, and, in truth, I was nearly choking with passion; and I am sure you would have done the same, Nelly, for you would have seen no joke in treating girls to your goodies, after they had been making fun of you, and turning your papa and mamma into ridicule. But this was not all; for one rude thing, upon ascertaining from me that mamma made it, said, in a voice running over with vinegar, "I thought so, for she has forgotten the plums." Then my oranges were cut into quarters, and I had to hand them round also (*the governesses had halves!*) until all was gone, and I had only two pieces myself as a favor. Now, don't think me greedy, Nelly—you know I don't care for feasting, only I do not like to be forced to be generous, and to give to all alike, whether I like them or not—offering as much to that proud Miss Noble (who is not too proud, however, to eat another girl's cake) as to dear Meggy. I dare say it is very pleasant when it's not your own—"share and share alike" is all very fine; but I should like to know when their goodies are coming? As I am the last girl entering this term, I suppose it won't be before next half-year? And I mean to say, Nelly, it is most heart-rending—putting insult on the top of cruelty—to force you to help the governesses, and to *double shares, too*, whilst I'm sure my slice broke all to pieces, it was so miserably thin.

Oh, dear, there's Mrs. Rodwell. If she catches me writing, I shall be found out; so, my own darling Nelly, I must say good-by. Mind you write soon, and tell me all about dear S. Has he asked after me? and often? Is he pale? Tell him not to forget your devoted, true-hearted

KITTY CLOVER.

P. S.—Oh! Nelly, I have had such a fright; my heart is jumping up and down like a canary in a cage when the cat's underneath it. Only think of the Lady Principal's coming up to my desk. I made sure it was to ask me for this letter, and I determined in my mind to swallow it sooner than let her read it. But, thank goodness! it was only to say she had not opened my last letter to you, as it was sealed; but, for the future, she would close them herself, after looking over their contents. Much obliged! Catch me giving her any other than my own compositions. So, darling, we are safe; but isn't that lucky?

P. S.—I'm sure you'll never be able to read this scrawl. Why didn't you answer my last?

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LETTERS LEFT AT THE PASTRY-COOK'S:: BEING THE CLANDESTINE ...
Mathew, Horace
Godey's Lady's Book (1848-1854); Mar 1854; 48, American Periodicals
pg. 247

LETTERS LEFT AT THE PASTRY-COOK'S:

BEING THE CLANDESTINE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN KITTY CLOVER AT SCHOOL, AND HER "DEAR, DEAR FRIEND" IN TOWN.

EDITED BY HORACE MAYHEW.

THE THIRD LETTER LEFT.

(*Dated March 3d.*)

SHOWING WHAT KITTY THOUGHT OF SOME OF HER SCHOOL-FELLOWS.

I DO begin, Nelly, to like this wretched place a little better. All the girls are not Nobles and Peacocks; and it 's lucky they ain't, for I never met with such a couple of disagreeable things. They set themselves up for great judges and wits, ridiculing everything they do not like, and trying to make the rest feel humbled and worthless, because our mas have never been to court, or our pas do not drive a pair of horses!

Meggy Sharpe and I both think Annie Flower much prettier than Rosa Peacock, although she is not a fine lady, and her father is only a farmer. They call her "Dairymaid;" but, for all that, Miss Rosa Peacock is jealous of her beautiful complexion, and is always imitating Annie's merry laugh.

That little impudent thing with the turn-up nose is a Miss St. Ledger. Her pa is a city alderman, and a great patron of Mrs. Rodwell. Meggy calls her "Piggy," because she is always stuffing—hiding in the closets and the box-room, to eat *by herself*, the things she smuggles into the college. Whenever you meet her in the

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passages, she cannot speak—her cheeks are crammed so full of goodies. They tell a story against her about the drawing-room piano. It was terribly out of tune, and upon examination was found to be full of orange-peel and peach-stones. The supposition is that Miss St. Ledger had taken the peaches and oranges up with her to be able to eat them *on the sly* when she was practising, and, being suddenly disturbed, had thrown them inside the lid of the grand piano, so as not to be detected. This greedy girl is extremely rich, and she is always boasting that her papa could buy up a whole street of such poor creatures as Noble and Peacock, who she says, have *nothing but debts for a fortune, and a title to pay them off with.* At the same time, she flatters them, and tries all she can to get friendly with them; but they only *snub* her the more. But, Nelly, she dresses so beautifully, always in silks, and her pocket-handkerchiefs are as fine as muslin, and, I'm speaking the truth, trimmed with real *Valenciennes!* They give you a fever to finger them. Then she has boxes upon boxes full of the most lovely ribbons and belts; whilst Madame La Vautrien makes her bonnets, and charges three guineas apiece for them! But, in spite of all her finery, she is the meanest girl in the school—so stingy and greedy, always borrowing, and never lending—never sharing, never helping any one. I do not like her a bit—nasty, disagreeable thing! if she did not go and pry into my boxes; and I heard her telling the girls "all was cheap and common—only one silk dress, and that a turned one of mamma's." The lady principal is very fond of her (her money, more likely), and is always sending her into the drawing-room to practise (though she can't play a bit), because she is so fat and fine, and has hot-house grapes sent to her.

Miss Plodder is another favorite. She is the "Good Girl." Her nickname is "Preterpluperfect." Poor girl, her face makes you sad to look at it! It seems full of tasks and forfeits. Her fingers are always inky, and her hand is so cold that touching it is as unpleasant as the tearing of silk. My blood runs cold merely to think of it. She never plays or laughs, but is always thumbing her lessons, though what she does with her learning no one can tell, for she is never "up" in class, and is always sent "down" at examinations.

How different is dear Lucy Wilde! She seems to know everything without looking at a book. It comes as naturally to her as eating. Ah! she is clever. The professors pay her such compliments before all the school, and the governesses are afraid of her. The lady principal, however, cannot bear Lucy, because she is idle, and up to fun. She tries to keep her down; but Lucy is like a cork in a pail, she is sure to come to the top again. The more she is pushed under, the more she rises. With all her madcap tricks, she is always at the head of the class. How she learns no one can tell, for she is never seen with a book. Meggy says it comes to her in her sleep. Professor Drudge told us last week that if Lucy could only be tamed into studying she could do anything, and I believe it. She writes verses, too—little satirical poems on the mistresses, and Peacock and Noble; and sent off on Tuesday the most beautiful Valentine I think I ever read.

But, Nelly, it is Amy Darling you would love best—a bright, pleasant girl, all sunshine, except when she cries, and she cries immediately any one is hurt. We all run to Amy directly we are in trouble. She is like a young mother to us, and treats us with such tenderness that it is almost a pleasure to be in trouble to be comforted by Amy. She consoles one so beautifully; and I'm sure, if our puddings were taken away, we should miss them far less than the absence of dearest Amy. You should see how the little girls crowd round her in the play hours, and pull her about. She romps with them with the greatest good-humor, and never tires in teaching the little things some new game. She was in bed for three days once, and one would have imagined there was a death in the house; but when she recovered, we made so much noise that the lady principal came down from her boudoir to inquire what was the matter. It's strange! She is not clever, nor altogether pretty, nor even professional (her papa's a coachmaker), and yet, somehow, notwithstanding these tremendous drawbacks, she is the favorite of all the school. Even the masters and schoolmistresses cannot help giving the preference to Amy. Professor Drudge himself, who seems to love nothing in the world but his snuff-box, pats her occasionally on the head, bestowing on her at the same time *a grim snuffy smile*, that he accords to no one else. She is such a dear, dear love! so sweet—so full of joy and sympathy—that I really believe, Nelly, she was intended for an angel, and was only made a school-girl by mistake. Her sweetness is best shown by the fact that Peacock and Noble never give themselves airs to her, though her father is but a coachmaker. She would shame them out of their vulgarity without retorting a harsh word, and make them blush (if that was possible) by merely reproaching them kindly. It is a wonder for a school, where there are so many girls, that not one of

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them is jealous of Amy. Such a thing would appear unnatural. It would be like being jealous of your mother, or of a nurse who had tended you through a long illness. We are too grateful to be jealous; for there is not a girl in the school, big or little, but who has some cause to be grateful to her. The little girls she protects, and saves them from being bullied; and the big ones she advises when they are in a mess, besides helping them through their tasks. She is the protectress that all fly to—the peacemaker that all abide by (*even those in the wrong*); and the general *confidante* of us all, the poor mistresses included. Meggy calls her our "Sister Confessor;" and really it is terrible to think of the heap of secrets that must be piled up, as high as the boxes on a Margate steamer, upon her honor. When you think, Nelly, it is as much as we can do to keep *one* secret, I wonder how Amy can breathe with such a load upon her breast! Yet she carries it all as lightly as a fairy does her wand.

Meggy says, "poor Mary Owen is in pawn to Mrs. Rodwell," which means that she has been left as security for a debt, as hopeless as any national one.

Years ago (so Meggy tells me) Mary's father —a captain in the army—left her at school, with directions that she was to learn everything, and no expense spared in her education. With the exception of one or two small remittances, nothing has been heard of her father since. Year after year, Mary grows paler and more sad, with not a friend in the world to cling to, but dearest Amy, who treats her more like a sister than anything else, being always by her side, as something told her that if the poor girl hadn't a crutch of some sort to lean upon she would assuredly fall to the ground. The lady principal has lost all hope of Mary being ever claimed, or (worse still) of her bill being ever paid. This makes Mary's position all the more melancholy, for she is pointed to as a kind of living monument to the cardinal virtues of the schoolmistress who keeps her. If there is a little sermon on charity or benevolence, Mary is always chosen as its text. Whenever there is a lecture read about ingratitude, poor Mary is always brought forward as the disgraceful illustration of it. It is the same with dishonesty, *taradiddles*, fibbing, and the entire category of school vices—Mary serves as the example of them all. It would seem as if the poor girl was kept as a "terrible warning" to the college; and I'm sure in this capacity alone, that her bill has been paid more than twenty times over. It is sad to watch the poor girl while she 's being thus publicly pointed at before her school-fellows. She never says a word, nor attempts to defend herself. She sits quietly in her seat, her face growing paler, and her head falling lower with each blow of her accuser; and if you saw her heavy, tearless eye, Nelly, and her lips quite colorless, as I have seen them, you would pity her with all your heart, and long to go up and kiss her, and tell her not to mind it. Often and often have I felt inclined to call out and beg of Mrs. Rodwell to stop such cruelty; but fear has pinched my lips, and I have caught myself crying, and I defy any one to help it. But I don't mean to say that Mrs. Rodwell ill-treats Mary, or is positively unkind, or lifts her hand against her; but she is always taunting her with her misfortune in so sharp a manner, that I would sooner by far be beat outright, or be sent away at once. It is one unceasing tyranny of little petty trifles all day long (a tyranny of pins and needles, Meggy calls it), which I call most cowardly for a woman like Mrs. Rodwell (though she has lost her money) to use against a poor girl who cannot defend herself: just as if Mary wouldn't pay if she could! On such occasions, Amy is kinder to her than ever, and struggles, by dint of affection, and by trying to lead her into play, to make her forget the harshness she has experienced during school hours. I'm not certain that she succeeds very well. Mary tries, in grateful return for so much kindness, to smile and to play; but it isn't smiling nor playing, Nelly; it's working, and *hard working* at it.

Her dress is the funniest thing you ever saw. When I say funny, I do not mean it makes you laugh—far from it—but that it is extremely odd and peculiar. At first, Mary used to wear the cast-off things of two Indian girls, who are here and never go home; but since she has grown tall she is packed up in Mrs. R.'s old trumpery finery, and flits about like a thin shadow of what the lady principal was six months previously. No one, however, is cruel enough to quiz Mary. Her sorrow throws a sacred protection over her that is better than any shield, and even Miss St. Ledger (with her pert turn-up nose) forgets the sharpness of her tongue in her presence. Amy, besides, wouldn't allow any one to slight her. They tell me, Nelly, that when "breaking-up day" comes round, and all are skipping about in the wild joy of being fetched home, poor Mary sits silently apart, shunning everybody—avoiding the windows where all the girls are heaped together, watching the arrival of the carriages; and that she almost runs away from dear Amy's caresses, rejecting her loving endeavors to cheer her, as

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if they were a source of pain to her. Dear Amy always stops the last with her; but, when it comes to her turn to go away, then poor Mary flings herself round her devoted friend's neck, and bursts into one long flood of tears, as if her heart was breaking. May we never know such grief as that, Nelly! Only think, dearest, how cheerless must the holidays be to the poor homeless girl! The reassembling of school, which school-girls dread so much, must come back to her with all the delight of holidays to us.

Once Amy asked for Mary to go home with her, but the lady principal objected to it. It would take too much money and trouble to "get her up." Amy said she should wear her things; but Mrs. Rodwell still objected. She was afraid (Meggy says) to "trust the security of her debt out of sight!" Poor Mary has never left the Princesses' College now for four years, except at such times when she has been out walking with the school!

This is very sad and terrible, Nelly, and we ought to think ourselves very fortunate that we have such good papas and mammas, and that our positions in life are very different from that of poor Mary Owen! But I have written myself quite miserable, and you too, I am afraid, Nelly; so no more at present, dear, from

Your little stupid

KITTY CLOVER.

P. S. Excuse haste.

P. S. Why don't you write?

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LETTERS LEFT AT THE PASTRY-COOK'S:: BEING THE CLANDESTINE ...
Mayhew, Horace
Godey's Lady's Book (1848-1854); Apr 1854; 48, American Periodicals
pg. 334

LETTERS LEFT AT THE PASTRY-COOK'S:

BEING THE CLANDESTINE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN KITTY CLOVER AT SCHOOL, AND HER "DEAR, DEAR FRIEND" IN TOWN.

EDITED BY HORACE MAYHEW.

THE FOURTH LETTER LEFT.

(*Dated March 9th.*)

SHOWING WHAT KITTY THOUGHT OF SOME MORE OF HER SCHOOLFELLOWS.

In my last letter, I forgot to tell you about the two Miss Suetts, Emilia and Julia. They are fat, and round, and heavy, like (Meggy says) a couple of yeast dumplings. Their parents are in India, and they never go home. No one cares much about that, however; for they are great *teazers*, and the most dreadful *tell-tales*. But they are never without preserves and pickles of some kind, and have such delicious pomegranates and guava jelly sent to them, in such large blue jars, that, after all, I doubt if any two girls would be more missed from the school than the two Suetts—disagreeable things as they are. You should only taste their tamarinds, Nell!

There is also Ada Steele, the poetess, who writes verses, some of which have actually appeared in print (in the "Family Page," I think), and you cannot imagine how conceited she is about it. I am told she knows every line of poetry that ever was written. She is such a dreadful plague, that I never go near her if I can avoid it. You cannot ask her what's the day of the month, but she'll give you a hundred lines of poetry right off from some poet or other. Meggy calls her "a tap of poetry," which once turned on, will go on running till you stop it. Byron is her especial favorite, and she always calls him "dear." His works are not allowed in the college; but Ada Steele has got a copy of them, and she puts it under her pillow every night.

But the girl I dislike most is Susan Carney. Fancy a tall, thin creature, with hair the color of blotting-paper, and with eyes like an owl's, that cannot look at you, and you have her standing before you. She is the "*sneak*" of the school; and moves about like a cat. When we are talking secrets, and turn round, there she is—pretending to look for something, but in reality listening. Or, if a girl has comfortably got one of James's delicious novels inside her grammar, and looks up to see that it is all right and

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snug, there is Carney's cold, fishy eye sure to be fixed sideways upon her. Meggy says her eye is so sharp, she's confident that, like a needle's, *it would cut thread*. We cannot have a bit of fun but Miss Carney is sure to spoil it. We cannot read or write a letter in class without her knowing it. We cannot talk to the masters, or have a comfortable bit of gossip about the filthy dinners and the lady principal, without our being requested, before the day is half over, "to step to Mrs. R.'s boudoir," after which you will see the girls coming back with red eyes and burning cheeks.

The oddest thing is, no one is sure that it is Carney who tells, though every one is convinced that she does. She manages it so cleverly that she is never found out. We tease her as much as we dare, calling her "policeman," "spy," "tell-tit," and everything we can think of; but it takes no effect upon her. She turns a little pale, talks morality in a whining tone, and leaves it to Mrs. Rodwell to redress her wrongs.

Another curious thing is the way in which she wheedles a secret out of you. Though on your guard, she flatters and fawns, and coaxes and lectures till you have parted with your secret long before you are aware of it. You would imagine she was chloroform, so cleverly does she extract it, without the smallest consciousness on your part. The fact is, she *crawls over you*, Nelly; and as for talking, it is my firm belief she would talk a letter out of a letter-box. She is exceedingly neat and clean, with not a single hair out of bounds; and, somehow, her dresses do not rustle, nor her shoes creak, as other persons' do. She is down upon you, like a shower at the horticultural *fête*, before you have time to run for it. What with her crawling, and her sleek appearance, and her gliding so noiselessly about the room, she looks like a big lizard, or some slippery serpent, that was advancing towards you; and I always feel inclined to scream, or to put up my parasol, when she comes near me, to frighten her away.

Nor is she much a favorite with the remainder of the school. The little girls bribe her with oranges and cakes, and lend her small sums of money, to prevent her telling. But the big girls know it's no use, and waste nothing upon her; they know well enough she will take the bribe one minute, and go and *blab* the next. The governesses are even afraid of her, and begin talking of the weather whenever she approaches.

But what shocks me the most, Nelly, is that she is righteous. She moans and groans, and turns up the whites (or the yellows, rather) of her eyes, and is *so* pious at church, and is always inveighing against "the shameful wickedness" of the school. Then she reads hymns, and is embroidering a *prie-dieu* for her godpapa, who is something in the church, and exceedingly rich; and she writes such insufferably long sermons, twice the length of anybody else's; and after service she begs to see Mrs. Rodwell, *pour confier son cœur* as she calls it, but we all know what that means, for as sure as plum-pudding on Sunday, some one is sure to be punished that same afternoon! I only wish we could find her out in anything. I really believe the entire school would rush up to the lady principal, and tell of her. But Miss Carney is far too cautious to be caught tripping! They tell me she even sleeps with her eyes open.

Let us turn from this hateful creature (I can't help hating her, Nelly) to some more agreeable subject. I will not tire you with descriptions of Miss Smiffel, the butcher's daughter, or Miss Embden, the baker's daughter, except to tell you that they have a sad time of it, and are called rare ugly names, because their papas happen to be butchers and bakers, just as if they could help it. I need not tell you, either, about Lizzy Spree, a little, merry, fidgety, laughing thing, with black eyes, who is the romp—the "bad girl" of the school. She is always playing tricks, making apple-pie beds, or sewing up the tops of our stockings, or hiding the dancing-master's shoes, or tying the cat's tail to the parrot's leg, or filling Miss Blight's bed with bread-crumbs and cockchafers, or breaking a window, or tearing her dress every day. The consequence is, she is always in punishment; but she cares no more for it than a duck cares for an umbrella. She spends all her pocket-money on crackers and detonating balls and valentines, and is always going to be expelled; only Mrs. Rodwell relents, and gives her "one chance more." The maid fell down stairs with the soup-tureen yesterday, from the fact of her strewing the kitchen-steps with marbles and orange-peel. It was too bad. We had to go without soup in consequence.

But, Nelly, you would quite love little Jessie Joy; she is the wee'st little thing you ever saw. You might hang her to your *châtelaine*. You would declare that she was not more than ten, and yet she was sixteen last birthday. She has a rosy round face, and little flaxen curls, exactly like a pretty doll, if you could only keep her still for a moment to look at her. She plays about the room like the sun on a looking-glass, and her whole body seems to quiver with light. I defy you to catch her, unless, perhaps, it was in the dark. We call her "pet" and "tiny."

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I don't know how it is Jessie cannot be taught; and yet she is far from being an idiot, for the little thing understands; nor is she stupid, for she is quick enough to outwit us all. Still, they have never been able to teach her anything. Her eyes (I don't know what color they are) fly away like butterflies directly you attempt to catch them, and settle on all places but on her book. We think she can read, but no one is sure of it. If told to learn, she pouts her lips like cherries, until you feel inclined to bite them; and her little head swings to and fro, Nelly, like the bells on a fuchsia when set a dancing by the wind. The lady principal cannot scold her. The utmost she can do is to call her to her in an angry tone, when she takes up her little head in her two hands as if it were a bowl of milk, and kisses her gently on the forehead. This is all her punishment; and the little culprit runs back into her place as quick as a rabbit.

But if she can't read, or spell, or learn, you should only hear her sing, Nell! It is like a wild bird. She warbles every air she hears. Music seems to gush from her like water from a fountain. Once she was caught playing, and they say it sounded like the rejoicing of good spirits; but she cried when they wanted her to do it again, and has never touched the instrument since. She dances more like a fairy than a human being. And yet when Monsieur Viaulon (the French dancing-master) attempted to teach her the polka, she ran away and hid herself behind the great globe in the music-room. The truth is, her dancing has nothing of the ball-room in it. She flits about so restlessly, it makes your eyes wink to look at her. Her feet never seem happy on the ground, and I always have a curious fear when the window is opened that Jessie will fly out of it.

The girls are rather frightened at her restless ways and her strange beauty, which seem to belong more to the air than to the earth. They declare that she is a fairy changeling; and that the tale which is told of her father being shot in a duel, and of her mother dying when Jessie was born, is all a story. Jessie rarely goes home. The only person who comes to see her is an aged aunt, with a face all over lines, like a railway map. She brings her plenty of toys and plenty of sweeties; but Jessie, apparently, does not care the least about her. The only person her flighty disposition stops in its giddy career to alight upon is Amy Darling. She listens to no one else without impatience—she will play with no one else, except it is a young kitten that belongs to the cook—she will obey no one else. But then I believe, if Amy spoke to the lightning, that she would stop it.

I am so tired of scribbling, dear Nelly, that I can't write any more to-day, though I could fill a whole band-box with particulars about this place. So no more at present from your dear affectionate.

KITTY.

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LETTERS LEFT AT THE PASTRY-COOK'S:: BEING THE CLANDESTINE ...
Mayhew, Horace
Godey's Lady's Book (1848-1854); May 1854; American Periodicals
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LETTERS LEFT AT THE PASTRY-COOK'S:

BEING THE CLANDESTINE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN KITTY CLOVER AT SCHOOL, AND HER "DEAR, DEAR FRIEND" IN TOWN.

EDITED BY HORACE MAYHEW.

THE FIFTH LETTER LEFT.

(*Written on copy-book paper, apparently left by hand.*)

SHOWING WHAT KITTY THOUGHT OF GOVERNESSES IN GENERAL, AND OF ONE IN PARTICULAR.

NELLY, dearest, I have formed a great determination. Nothing shall ever induce me to become that poor, absurd, ill-used creature, called a governess. I would starve sooner, or make shirts (which is pretty nearly the same thing), or emigrate and marry the first savage I met, or be a "touter" at a bonnet shop, or even go into service at a cheap lodging-house; anything, Nelly, sooner than be turned into that hopeless, spiritless, friendless being a governess seems destined by nature, or society, to be.

A governess in a private family is bad enough, but then she is not totally deprived of the comforts of home. She has a room, or at least a bed, entirely to herself, and her meals are generally the same as those of the family. Besides, a certain degree of respect is always paid to her. The servants are obliged to treat her with civility, *at all events in the presence of their mistresses;* and the mistresses are compelled to show her a little attention, if it is only done to set a good example to their servants. Then, again, their "young charges" cannot invariably be amusing themselves at her expense. They cannot always be teasing her. When they are taken out for an airing in the carriage, or when they are brought down after dinner with their shiny faces and glossy ringlets, or whenever there is company, or their parents and strangers are present, the governess enjoys a brief respite from that system of petty tyrannies she is the untiring victim of elsewhere. She has her few pleasures, though perhaps they may come at long straggling intervals; she has her distractions, her excitements in moving about in the world, and going to places of public amusements, and

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occasionally she knows what it is to enjoy the sweet success of rivalry—for have we not seen, Nelly, many a poor neglected governess who was doing the work of a musician at the piano, without his wages, receive in the course of the evening more attention than the fine young ladies themselves who were the worshipped idols of the establishment?

But the governess in a girls' school has a very different life of it, Nelly. She hasn't a moment to herself. She is the first to rise and the last to go to bed. She hasn't even the privacy of a bedroom to herself, for she is obliged to sleep in the same room as the girls, to look after them. The only privacy she knows is when she creeps into bed and draws the curtains round her. Our play-hours are no play-hours to her; rather on the contrary, for then her torments really begin, and only end when the bell rings again for class. She is the target at which every little chit fires her fun, and thinks she has a perfect right to do so. She is the only game at which the girls never tire of playing, and to see how they enjoy it you would imagine there was no amusement like it. It is true, Nelly, I have not seen much misery yet, and hope I never shall; but I can hardly imagine anything in this world *more miserable than a school governess on a half-holiday.*

Why, look at poor Blight. I have only to look upon her to feel for the sufferings of the whole class. Her nature seems to be sun-dried. She never smiles, and there is such an air of resignation about her, such a tone of despair that runs through all her words and smallest movements, that it is perfectly clear Hope never whispers into her ear any of those soft motherly words which soothe the agony of one's heart and lull it quietly off to sleep.

She may justly be called our "mistress of all work." She does a little of everything; she helps the smallest girls to dress; takes the junior pupils; hears the reading; sees to the wardrobes; gives out the linen; teaches needlework; and superintends the Saturday night's cleaning; in short, she is expected, as they say of servants, "to make herself generally useful," which means, in our instance, that she is worked to death by everybody, and spared by nobody; besides being teased, deceived, bullied, and ridiculed by every one who has a fancy that way; and for leading a life like this, she only gets 16*l.* a year, and her board and lodging during the holidays!

Snapp (another of our teachers) smiles at Blight's old-fashioned learning. She says it is quite out of date, and only fit for a charity school. Mademoiselle (the French teacher) quizzes her dress, and makes fun of her melancholy, and talks of her contemptuously, as, "*ça*," which I am told is the same as if you were speaking of a cook, or a poor relation, and called her "it." Fraulein (the German mistress) mimics her, and laughs over her patient endurance and old-maidish manners.

It must be confessed that poor Blight's appearance affords plenty of temptation for this cruel ridicule. She is certainly very ugly, and no one ever loses an opportunity of telling her so. The worst is, the example set by the schoolmistress is followed with the greatest zest by the schoolgirls, who indulge in all kinds of practical jokes at her expense. She is unfortunately very short-sighted, and consequently they are always hiding her spectacles, or else rubbing the glasses over with butter or ink. No one considers there is any harm in this, for the girls have grown to look upon Blight as "fair game;" and if any one can put her into a passion, it is considered "rare fun," and thought just as harmless as throwing bread-pills at one another when the mistress's back is turned. When there is no other amusement going on, the cry is always raised, "Let's go and tease Blight," and you see the whole school rushing forward as eagerly as if a gypsy suddenly appeared at the play-ground gate to tell us our fortunes. But if any one is in trouble, Blight is the first to screen her. If any girl is ill, Blight will sit up with her all night, and will pet and nurse the little sufferer until she almost fancies herself at home; and when the little invalid has grown well again, and has recovered the use of her tongue and fingers, Blight never says a word about the ungrateful return, but bears it all like a martyr, which, in truth, she really is. Ugly as she is, I really think there are times when I could *throw my arms round her neck, and kiss her for her goodness.*

I cannot tell you all the nicknames which they have for her face and person, nor would it altogether be agreeable for you, Nelly, I think to hear them. Suffice it to say, the poor thing, is very old—*thirty-nine*, if she is a day; and she has the funniest little head of hair, every hair appearing to be pulled as tight, and to be almost as wide apart, as the strings of a harp. The top of her head is mounted with a round knot of hair no bigger than the worsted ball you see on a Scotch cap. It's a wonder to me she doesn't wear a wig or a cap of some sort, though perhaps it would be too dangerous, as every one would undoubtedly be trying to pull it off. The girls declare no one can recollect her having a new gown. Every quarter a very thin, snuff-brown silk, on a very stiff lining, is brought out as Sunday best,

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but it is only the old one turned and altered a bit, for that little wicked thing, Jessie Joy, put a drop of ink on one of the breadths on purpose to find it out; and there it is still, journeying about backwards and forwards, first in front and then behind; now on the top, just under her chin, and next down at the bottom, sweeping the floor, precisely as the faded silk is twisted or turned to hide the creases and the ravages of old age. The girls calculate the period they have been at school by this venerable gown; and it's no unusual thing to hear them, when disputing about any particular date, settling it at once by referring to the age of Miss Blight's brown silk, saying, "I recollect very well it was in the ninth quarter of Blight's Sunday gown;" and a reference to a date of this kind is considered as indisputable as to a Family Bible, or an old almanac.

But these are small matters, Nelly, which I am half ashamed to tell you, for under this poor garment there is a heart of so much goodness as to make us wonder at the strange hiding-places in which virtue sometimes delights in lurking, as if from modesty it had taken every precaution not to be found out. What do you think, Nelly? I am told by Meggy that poor Blight supports an old bedridden mother! She has no positive proof of this, but she is morally sure of it. This, then, accounts for the reason why the poor governess is always working so hard—never resting from crocheting purses, and knitting antimacassars sufficient to cover all the sofas in the world. If you ask her for whom she makes this extraordinary quantity (you can't think, Nell, how quickly and beautifully she works), she simply replies, her pale face becoming paler, "*for a dear friend;*" and that is all we can get out of her to reward our vulgar curiosity. This must be the truth, for at all hours, both early and late, has she got a needle in her hand. There is a story that she wakes up sometimes in the middle of the night, and works whilst the girls around her are sleeping. But no one knows the cause of her excessive industry, and I really think she would be miserable if it were known, and her fingers would not ply their work of love half so nimbly if she suspected that the girls, as they watched her with such fixed curiosity, were acquainted with the sacred object for which she was toiling. It is a puzzle when or where she sells all the things she finishes, and no one exactly likes to find out, though one or two attempts have been made, but always ending, I am happy to say, in the most complete failure. It makes me sad to watch her anxiety when there is a postman's knock at the door. She starts up in her seat, and pauses for a while in her work (the only pause it ever knows), until she gives out the letters; and then you would pity her with all your heart to see how disappointed she is—what a vacancy of hope falls like a dark shadow upon her face—when she learns that there is not one for her! Though, when there is a letter, it is scarcely any better. She sighs heavily, looks sometimes at a little locket she carries in her breast, and hurries on with her work quicker than ever, as if the purse she was finishing was to contain her own money instead of somebody else's, and she had so much that she wanted the use of it immediately.

If you have any fancy-work you want doing (any braces or cigar-cases you wish to give away as presents), will you send it to me, Nelly, and I will ask Blight, if I can do so without offending her, to do it for me?

I'm obliged to finish my letter, Nelly, for the fact is I have been writing the latter part of it in our bedroom with a piece of wax candle I took out of a candlestick there was in the hall, and there is only just sufficient left to enable me to scramble into bed, and to assure you how dearly you are loved by

Yours affectionately,

KITTY CLOVER.

P. S.—I intend that my bootlace shall come undone somewhere about the grocer's, when we are out a walking to-morrow, so that I may lag behind, and drop this in the post unobserved. Oh! dear—the candle's gone out. What sh—

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HOME SKETCHES.: MY EARLY FRIEND; OR, PERSONAL VANITY.
Morton, Mary
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Oct 1855; 51, American Periodicals
pg. 346

HOME SKETCHES.

MY EARLY FRIEND; OR, PERSONAL VANITY.

BY MARY MORTON.

It is a sad, a humiliating thought that the immortal intellect, given us by a Divine power, and for Divine purposes, should ever become enslaved by the clay by which it is enshrouded; that our vain love for that clay, and the beauteous form in which it is moulded, should ever so entirely absorb our faculties that we should have no time, no thought for the improvement of the godlike gift within us, that which has, or should have power to bring joy to the heart of the sorrowing, comfort to the bed of affliction, happiness to the lone orphan or childless widow, and light and cheerfulness to all by whom we are surrounded.

What matters it, in either of these relations, if the features *be* plain, if beauty dwell not on the brow, or if age and sorrow have dimmed the brightness of the eye? We cannot remember one who ever bestowed pure, heartfelt happiness upon us who has not an angelic countenance; the heart *will* speak through the "human face divine." And what but the soul makes it divine? We know that bright features must decay; and there is also an instinct within us which tells, in language stronger than all the writings handed down through past ages, that this mind *will* exist and expand long, long after its frail earthly casket shall have crumbled away, and mingled with its sister dust.

How wrong, then, to fling such a priceless treasure away upon the sands of this life's sea! A few moments will flit noiselessly by; then the dark waves of death will sweep recklessly over it, and swallow up forever a mind which, if properly valued and cultivated, might have shed beams of Heaven's own light upon its less favored fellows.

I had a friend in my girlhood's days who was very beautiful; but it was not her beauty that won my love. There was a deep well of affection in that heart, a longing to love and be loved, such as is not often found in the heart of a beautiful girl, whose daily food is vanity; she was flattered, courted, caressed by all. Father, mother, brothers, and friends, all idolized their own lovely Emma, not for her sweetness of disposition, or her unbounded love for them, but because she was so beautiful. The pure, fresh air of heaven was scarcely suffered to fan her cheek, lest its rough breath might sully her deli-

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cate complexion. Ah, what folly! Do not the rose, and the lily, and carnation breathe such air? And who will say it is not quite as necessary to the life, health—ay, and *beauty*, of our own fair *human* flowers?

Admirers and lovers flocked round her; and one, her equal in all save personal attractions, loved her deeply, ardently, and loved her, too, for her warm, loving heart more than for her beauty. Did his noble love meet its reward? No! And yet she gave him all the deep wealth of affection of which that heart of hers was full; love which had been smothering there for years unheeded gushed forth at the sweet touch of sympathy and happiness, such as she had never known—filled her pure heart to overflowing.

And yet this deep, yearning love, the heart's only life, must be sacrificed at the shrine of vanity. Their beautiful Emma must not be thrown away; those lovely features, their pride and delight, must raise her to a far higher position in society than *he* could give her.

Gentle, yielding, confiding, a thought of disobedience never crossed her mind; and thus was he dismissed, but well *I* knew at what a sacrifice. Deep, heart-rending sobs of anguish burst from her heart; but they were only heard by her God, and by me, her sole confidant. And henceforth she was calm as the waters of a lake unruffled by the breeze, and perfectly passive in their hands. She did not pine and die, dear reader, as you are no doubt expecting; but she went with her friends wherever they wished, mingling in all the amusements of the season. But you could have seen, had you observed closely, that her smiles were not as of yore, gushing warm and free from a joyous heart, but rather artificial lights, placed there to deceive her friends into the belief that she was happy.

A year or two afterward, a young gentleman of superior intellect and pleasing address became her suitor; and, at the urgent solicitation of her friends, she entered into an engagement with him. But, ere the time appointed for the marriage rolled round, the dreaded cholera king came on a mission of death to the village in which she resided; and one warm night in July, when the mild moon seemed gazing down in pity on the earth to think her beauty was so fleeting, the dark visitor breathed lightly in passing upon our fragile flower; and the next day she was laid in the earth, and flowers as delicate, and almost as lasting, were planted on her breast.

I was afar off when I heard that my young friend was no more, and at first could scarcely reconcile to myself the truth that one so beautiful *could* die; but with a conviction of its reality came a feeling of relief, for well I knew that, had she married, it would never have been a *heart union*—that the mystic cords of love and sympathy would not have bound them in one—and I felt it were far better that one like her should die than take vows her heart could never fulfil.

And afterward, as I knelt by her grave, my heart bitterly condemned the folly of those to whose care her young life had been intrusted. Here lay all that was left of the loved and admired companion of my early days; none perhaps, save myself, ever thought of her but as a gay butterfly, who had lived her short summer day, and was no more. *I* knew she had a *soul*, one, too, which, with proper culture, might have left behind a shining record of good and perfect deeds; but *this* was the end of her form and features of loveliness unsurpassed, and of her warm, loving woman's heart—clay, which had been refined and sanctified by the immortal soul which had inhabited it, mixing once again with its kindred clay, unheeded, if not forgotten, all its beauty a cold, damp, "kneaded clod."

Sisters (ye who are still young and beautiful), look around you! See you yon aged man, tottering beneath the weight of years? Ask of him if his life seems long. He will go in a moment of time back to the days when, with her who is now no more, but who travelled her life journey hand in hand with him, he stood, on a beautiful moonlit evening, by the old oak in the yard, and wondered if sorrow *could* dwell in a world like this. He will tell you of this, and say: "It seems as though it were yesterday." Ask that "matron with the silver hair" if it seems long since she was young. *She* was a beauty in her day. She will tell you of a blue-eyed girl, her first-born and dearest one, how she died in her arms, and say: "It seems as though it were yesterday."

Oh, what a very shadow is earth-born beauty! The rose, blushing to-day at the consciousness of her own beauty, to-morrow begins to fade; the lily, fairer than the most delicate maidenly brow to-day, to-morrow is stamped with earth's own signet, *decay!* Why, then, waste one precious moment in decorating that which is so transient? No, my sisters! Let a higher aim possess your thoughts; so, when your little day here is spent, you may look back upon a life of usefulness, and forward to its reward.

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MY STORY.
AN OLD MAID
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MY STORY.

BY AN OLD MAID.

Did you ever think, reader, when you laugh (for everybody laughs) at an old maid, what an experience may have been hers? how near she may have been to the goal which all women (according to general opinion) strive to win? how the prize may have been almost within her grasp? the golden fruit before her eyes? I think, if the interior experience of the old maid could be more generally written out, if the world could oftener know how she has loved, and why she has not married, there would be fewer sneers for her, and more compliments.

I am not one of those who have suffered from the lowest ridicule, because those who indiscriminately sneer cannot cause me any suffering. I have not been pitied, or laughed at, as one who "couldn't get married;" the aspersions against me have been of another character. I have been stigmatized as cold, heartless, proud, egotistical, self-sufficient, &c. &c.

It has been thought that I am "incapable of love," or that, at least, "no man knoweth to the contrary," but I intend that the readers of the "Lady's Book" shall understand me better.

If women prone to love are depreciated and condemned, no better fate awaits their sisters on the opposite limb of the balance. To be hard is as objectionable as to be soft; to be indifferent as to be forward. Indeed, the woman is more disliked, both by the opposite sex and her own, who is supposed to hold herself above the possibility of "the soft impeachment." And the reason is evident. It is unnatural to be wholly self-satisfied, self-dependent, self-sufficient; she who is above loving, is above humanity; and must take the consequences. I have been so accused, and I have meekly borne the accusation, because it was preferable to the confession that I have loved in vain. Thus far my secret has been kept, and I have been content; I intend now only to confide *sub rosa* to the "Lady's Book" and the thousands of its monthly guests.

Perhaps I had better not go back to the very first experiences; to the time when I, a giddy girl, saw an awkward ill-accoutred boy kneeling before me, and tittered in his face, to the time when I beheld a stalwart man come trembling, with his knees smiting together like Belshazzar's, and dropped his hat at my feet. I will pass on to the times when my own feelings became more interested. Not that I passed blameless through these ordeals, but I did not blame myself. Surely, the simple right of rejection is unqualifiedly woman's. Why should men want, if they have an undoubted right to us, simply for the asking? Why do they ask us, if we may not as well say "no" as "yes?" I was not guilty of the slightest manœuvring, pains-taking, to obtain my suitors, and I did often take pains to spare them the pain of a refusal; to let them know the suit was hopeless, as soon as delicacy would permit me to see that it was a suit.

The first in whom I became seriously interested was a man of noble figure, and an attractive countenance. Indeed, he was called "perfectly beautiful" by "all the ladies." But it was too exclusively physical beauty to satisfy me; it was the beauty of the muscles and tendons; it was beauty of hair, and skin, and features; it was too little a beauty of the soul, of that which penetrates the face, as it were a transparent mask, and shows only its own spiritual grandeur.

He was wholly self-educated, and not well educated. Yet it was long before I learned all his ignorance and self-neglect; for he had wondrous tact, almost amounting to genius. It was not this, or he would have learned more; or known more intuitively. Perhaps he thought his handsome face and figure were all-sufficient. He was mistaken. No doubt he came to the conclusion that I had learning enough for both of us; and that some day, like all the rest of my possessions, it would be accounted unto him. He had much of character; the influence he gained over me proved that, and, when we first separated, I promised a correspondence. Letters are the most serious matters to those who are least able to write them. My consent to answer was to him far more like "an engagement" than his offer to write was to me. But I dearly loved all epistolary communication; and looked forward with delight to my first love-correspondence.

I was not long waiting for the salutatory paper; it was miserably written, misspelt, blotted and awkwardly folded. The first words cured

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me of all my weakness. It commenced "My Dear Angle." I could have endured martyrdom for a man I loved; I would, for his sake, have become an angel in good earnest; but to be thus metamorphosed by him into an "angle," I could not endure it. There was too much of earth, and too little of heaven about me for such an apotheosis.

My resolution was immediately taken, and I was firm. There were those who blamed me; who said that he was "good enough," and "too good;" and that I would "rue the day;" and "live to envy the wife he should take;" and "go through the woods, to take a crooked stick at last."

All this might come to pass; yet would I not be any man's "dear angle."

I had much mercy on him, and kept to myself the cause, even the causer, of the rupture. And he had the tact to abuse this generosity in a wonderfully ingenious manner. He spoke of me, it is true, as the first mover, but insinuated that he courted the movement. He alluded to me in a patronizing way, as one whom he could esteem, but who was too pedantic, and self-worshipping, for his love. The few for whom I much cared saw how it was, and respected me the more, that mind, and not person, must weigh down the scale in which my heart was balanced.

It may be as well to add here that Fortune was kind to him, as I never doubted she would be. He has wealth, and all the outward insignia of prosperity about him. He has beautiful children, and an amiable wife (who is doubtless well satisfied to be his "dear angle"); he has friends and foes enough to satisfy him that he is an enviable man. As Milton's last discovered song says, "I am old and poor," yet have I never envied "his wife;" never regretted that I did not continue his "dear angle."

I was very careful, after this, how I made acquaintances. I was chary of mankind, and confined my friendships to my own sex.

Then came my second love; oh, he was gifted indeed! and more than beautiful. As my first lover had been below me in education and pure intellect, this object of my adoration was as far above. I never heard any one compliment his person, though it was moulded like a statue; for the mind within so permeated all the rest, and the speech and manner, the presence of the man, were all so far more impressive than his looks, that these alone excited remark and commendation. How thoroughly he was esteemed may be inferred from the fact that the mystery of our separation was never referred, by the most intolerant gossip, to aught blamable in him.

We were never much together; the very intensity of our love kept us apart; for, though I deserved it not, and he did, yet he had the same worshipping reverence for me that I had for him. And this stimulated me to become more and more worthy of him. I was lifted up in my own estimation. My very soul expanded and unfolded its upper wings. How the world changed, and the people therein. Life was glorious; and heroism and martyrdom seemed but the natural and common and easy requisitions of existence. I breathed mountain air. Every step was upon the hill-tops; and every morn and eve I knelt and thanked God for this precious boon of life. And, with every prayer, was breathed a sigh that I was not more worthy of it. We also were to be separated for a time.

"I am to be absent a few weeks, possibly months," said he to me, as he placed a plain gold ring upon my finger; "if I see this, where I have placed it, upon my return, I shall venture to ask some questions that I have neither time nor courage to propose to you now."

And thus we parted. Ah, if he would only have written to me! Yet the contemplation of even this happiness was enough for this time; the remembrance of what he had said, and how he had said it, was food for memory. From such a man the slightest hint was significant; how much had he therefore conveyed in what he had so significantly said! I do not remember that I felt in any hurry for his return; there was so much joy in anticipation—such a delicious assurance of what was in store for me then. The heart can wait for a flood of happiness, when it is already full.

My ring, which I so doated on, as the talisman upon whose safe keeping all my life's happiness depended, I took off one night, and, after holding it to my lips, placed it upon my dressing-table. I was champooning my head after a fashion of my own, and did not wish to desecrate, or wear too roughly, my jewel. The next morning I looked for it, but it was not there. I searched, but in vain. Every cloth in the room was separately lifted, and shaken, and every movable carefully displaced. In vain I hunted; in vain I spied. I took up the carpet, and took down the curtain. I carried out the mattress, and brought in the microscope. All was of no avail! The family wondered why I took all this pains, "and the room was so thoroughly cleansed, late in the spring." Nor ought I so to fatigue myself. Fatigue! I could have carried off the gates of Gaza, nor have felt their weight.

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But I kept my secret. No one knew why I toiled so restlessly, and fussed so endlessly. No one was permitted to enter my room, or to touch a thing in it. Yet all my labor and precautions were vain. I knew of no raven, or crow, or cat, or mouse, or any living thing, who could have made away with it. Yet has it never been found. That I got up and swallowed it, while asleep, is as rational a supposition as any I have ever formed, about its disappearance.

But I "might have replaced the ring," some one will say. I hardly had time for that; or, if I had, I should not have dared, in the slightest thing, to deceive him. I should not have believed that I could do it; it seemed to me that there was a something in that simple ring no other ring ever possessed—a salient, visible, tangible charm—because it came from him. It was just as I finally despaired of the talisman's recovery, that he came. I must meet him; and his first glance was at that unjewelled finger. I alone saw the agony that passed like the shadow of some flitting demon over his countenance; and then he was calm. That calmness strengthened me; I too was cool, and staid, and stolid as a stone. I could not be otherwise in his presence than the reflex of himself.

Thus we parted, finally and forever. Oh, how the light paled out of the sun, and beauty faded from the earth! How like some dim masquerade seemed life; and how shorn of all its terror was the tomb.

But, says Mrs. Common Sense, with the gray gown, and linen collar, while she casts up her accounts, or measures from the yardstick her muslin, "but what an easy thing just to have explained the whole matter!"

Easy for you, madam, perhaps, and your matter-of-fact people, but impossible for me. You might have broken your way through the mystic cobweb that was woven between us. I could as soon have rent the veil of the temple from top to bottom. It would have been easy for you to tell him that the ring was lost, and you were very sorry; and then have asked him to proceed in the disclosures he would have made were it still upon that finger; pshaw!—you, madam, would never have had the opportunity.

Whatever had been the nature of the ties between us, they had been subtle as strong. The memory of them was now sacred to me. Henceforth I had a new incentive to purity of heart and beauty of life, for I must strive to give plausibility to the fiction that I had felt more than worthy of him. He was not only lost to me, but that whole great circle, included within his orbit, I had left behind. And, beyond it, if there were any beyond, was it for me? So, as a woman never thinks, or likes to think of accepting a lover inferior to one she has rejected, or through her own folly has lost, all of mankind were as naught to me now. Not that I wished for another, or thought of another; but, if I had. One thing sustained me. I was never humiliated in my own or my lover's estimation. In his eyes I was still upon that lofty pedestal; and it depended upon myself to retain ever my high position in the gallery of his memory. How did all this knowledge strengthen me to dignity, and calmness, and self-possession? Because fate had ordained it thus, was I to "cry like a sick girl?" I heard of his upward career with pride; and of his marriage with no pang of regret that, under my adverse fate, I had acted as I did.

Time passed on, and my third lover came. I was in no mood to welcome him; for, amidst the rest of the shadows, I saw him as the blind man, or rather "the man who was blind," saw men as trees walking. But he was an enthusiast, and loved as those do who will not be denied. My ire was as fuel to his fire. I could not forever remain passive to the ardor with which he sued. It is not in the nature of woman to be quite indifferent when a richly freighted human soul lays its best treasures before her for acceptance.

They told me he was beautiful, with his poet eye and glowing cheek. I thought little enough of what the world calls beauty; but I saw, and felt, the love that radiated from him to me. I began to muse, to consider, and then to nurse him in my heart. I knew that his nature was not grand, like his whom last I loved; but it contained some elements wanting there. He had more warmth, vivacity, ease, and agreeableness. He was more witty and eloquent. The home, the fireside qualities in him were superior. Then I had loved in the outer court, under the vault of heaven, beneath the shadowing wings of angels. I had knelt before the golden image, set on high before the eyes of all the people. Now it was otherwise; the heart went in to the secret recesses of the temple, and knelt in prayer and praise before the screened altar, where the fire burned bright and clear.

Once I had worshipped; now I loved. A thousand soft and tender chords were stirred that never had vibrated before. The spirit-harp was reattuned to gentler music. If I sometimes felt that, in some things, my lover was my inferior, I felt too a joy in dedicating all my powers to him; in bringing my whole nature into sweet

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subjection. It seemed but natural that love should equalize all. If, once before, I had breathed mountain air, I was now intoxicated with the perfumed breezes of the vale. And yet I hesitated. It was with the fear that this passionate overwhelming devotion to me was too much a thing of impulse to last. I could not trifle, or be trifled with. I could not love for a little while, and then forget it all. No! even my dead loves were more to me than living ones remain to many others. But, when months, and even years, passed by, and the love, instead of weakening, only waxed more strong, then I yielded. I felt how greatness, and talent, and learning, are not to the yearning soul as true and fond affection.

When, at last, he held me to his heart, with the words, almost in the old scripture phrase, "lovest thou me?" I too spontaneously breathed as near the same reply, "thou knowest that I love thee."

Here, according to the shrewd policy of the novelist, the scene should close, the final curtain should fall upon the happy denouement of the drama. Ah, but time does not stop thus! The great wheel goeth round; and that, which had been lifted to the heavens, anon is ground into the dust.

I soon saw that the heart I had bestowed upon my lover, and for which he had so long and passionately struggled, had lost all value by coming into his possession. Like the fabled coin of the fairies, it was dry leaves when taken into the hand. Perhaps there had been too much of the fairy world in it all! I was humbled in my own eyes, now that I was lessened in his. I was ashamed that I could not better retain a heart that had been mine; but, with all this, there was a feeling of contempt for the man whose undisciplined mind could so change and flitter. All I had ever feared had now come upon me; and it was only an aggravation to my distress that the man I loved I also despised. I knew that I could have done differently. I knew that he, whom I last had loved, could have so moulded his heart, by his will, that its love would never have died out. But he I now loved had not will, principle, firmness, purpose. I would do him justice. Perhaps these staid qualities are really inconsistent with the volcanic tumults that had so impressed me. I was in no disposition, when he first sought me, to respond to a calm, clear, judicious attachment. Such burning lava as had been thrown upon my heart could alone have lighted its fires. But the lava will cool and become stone; and the volcano will spend itself in the transient outburst.

At first I tried to doubt what I saw so clearly. I was too strongly *en rapport* with him to be deceived. Yet I must delude myself for a little while, so as to gain strength to look my misery in the face. I did not break from him passionately, nor call on fiends to aid me. I never reproached him for neglect; I never murmured a syllable of disappointment or of his change. My plan was fixed.

"Ah!" says Mrs. Prettyman, with five flounces on her dress, and pink flowers in her cap, "Ah, I'd have fixed him! I'd have brought him to his senses. What is coquetry given to a woman for? It is her natural, justifiable weapon. I'd have made his heart ache with jealousy."

Dear madam with the five flounces, and the pink flowers in her artificial hair, your coquetry would but have fed the demon of his vanity. No whims, nor pouts, nor tosses, nor petty tricks, nor weak little flirtations, would have succeeded there. Only the real encouragement of some other suitor, with a strong, noble, manly heart, really devoted to you, only that would have troubled him. And had I a right to so tamper with an honest man? to use so selfishly "the noblest work of God?"

I was right. I saw these little arts practised on him by another, in after times, and I saw how little they were worth. There was but this one course for me. I had loved with all my heart; now I must unlove with all my mind. I must bring will, and reason, and every nobler power of the soul to the warfare, and crush a passion unworthy of myself. It was very hard. I was wrenching the whole soul in tearing up these roots, so deep, and so entangled with everything therein. And I felt how sore, after this dissolution was over, the affections would lay sterile, blighted forevermore. But I did not shrink; I went into that inner temple, and quenched the fire, and scattered the ashes to the winds of heaven. If once the light had faded from the eye, now the heart lay bleeding.

And all this was done so quietly that none suspected the work that was going on, not even he who had caused it all to be done. For the face and form should bear no trace of the ravage that was working within; the lips should smile, and the eye should sparkle, and the mind should be compelled to interest itself in the novel, the embroidery, the household plans. These emotions and occupations, if persevered in, would, I know, give to the eye its immediate expression, and to the face its superficial lines; as for the

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tyrant will, beneath it all, would not that be seen? There are few who look so deeply; and it is easy to keep a face in such perpetual play, while you are with the common connoisseurs, that they shall not see those other lines which are deepening. As for the form, sleep must be commanded, thought be forcibly banished; and the frame will rest. Follow all the physical laws: woo the fresh air, the pure water, the fresh fruits, the solid food, and Nature, at least, is no betrayer. "Verily, thou shalt have thy reward." But did the person and manner show no trace of all this contest? The frame became thinner, but not markedly so; dress could much disguise all that. The hair wasted from the head, but went too gradually to be observed.

"And the woman?"

True, there might have been a change there; for Providence was otherwise dealing very bitterly with me then. Misfortune, death, and worse than death, were among us; and the hand of man should have rested soothingly on the form that was so stricken by God. But the great first trouble has this privilege over all others, that it benumbs the sensibilities for those that follow; you know of them, you think of them, you even feel them, but only so as to be sure they are there. So, it was rather a wonder than otherwise that I was so cheerful and spirited. God alone knew the agonies I had endured where there could be no sympathy, and he kept back his sore visitings until I could not deeply suffer beneath them; and when the time came that the few who can look through the eye into the heart's furthest chambers saw the skeleton there, they wist not what it was.

In my conquest of self was also involved the conquest of my lover. When he saw that I was no more his, that my love had died out, and my heart come home (he knew not how it came to die), he wanted it all back again. He implored forgiveness, and promised loyalty; but my work was thoroughly done. The fire had not only burned out upon the altar, but such tears had drenched the fuel that it never might be rekindled.

It was even his despair and its hopelessness that gave the new strength to the old passion; and could I have loved again, I would not. I knew how the old scenes might be re-enacted; and I was too well content that he should continue to love me to subject myself to the next phase of fickleness. I use harsh words, and yet I do not feel so harsh; every nature liveth and acteth according to its kind. The wild love that comes of a throbbing blood must have its revulsions, or it must cease to be.

If I had acted differently, if I had died, or gone into hysterics, or fainted in his arms, all might have ended better; but I could not do these things at once. As for dying, I never thought of it. The world was full of people who do not love; their loving days are over, or have not come, or never are to be. The lover is the exception, and always is marked in his community. I, too, could join the great unloving throng, and pass onward to the end.

I sometimes think of another palliative for my old love; he had so humbled himself to gain me (he might think) that his manliness would naturally reassert itself. I must not see him always dependent upon me for happiness, or even for love; so, perhaps, as I still wish to excuse him, there may be a ghost of the old love lingering in my heart. I sometimes think: "Oh, had I but died in the flush of that first victory! I should then have been evermore glorious to him; it was this that immortalized 'Highland Mary.'" But I am something to him now, more at least than any other yet has been. It was a strange experience for him, as it was a sorrowful one for me; and he does not forget.

"Well, but," says Mrs. Gray Gown, with the linen collar, "you 're a couple of fools! Why don't you get married now?"

"Ah, madam, for you it might do; but for me it is all too late. I cannot, nor do I regret that I have not done differently in this. I have never been sorry for the petrifying, half-suicidal course I adopted in crushing the love which was the life of my heart; I only regret that it had to be done."

So, they have called me cold and heartless, unfit for woman's duties, incapable of the tenderness of wife and mother. I, who have experienced all this, and who can even now hold the babe of the lowest emigrant to my breast (provided it be a pretty one) with a feeling that would do no discredit to a mother; but, as I have said, I am content that they should say so, and believe it, too.

* * * * *

I am now at that period of life called "the uncertain age," when time goes on softly, leaving fewer visible tracks; but I know well what the next change will be. I know whose hand will print dark hieroglyphics under my eyes and round my mouth! I know that the hair will silver (some gray ones even now), and my teeth decay (some are already gone). I am alone; yet do I not regret.

For *him*, there is another future, the race for the prizes of manhood, for honor and wealth; and these he can lay before some fair young face and fresh new heart, and in her taste anew

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the joys of life and love, at least I know that I should do so if I were in his place.

* * * * *

Elderly men, with silvered hair and easy fortunes, begin to come around me, and offer their names and housekeepers' situations to my acceptance. Some have large families of small children, and others have small families of large children; and there have been those among them with no families, who have made advances with a delicacy and feeling worthy of better success than they have met. Would it be better to—but no! After this long adherence, I will keep my resolution unto the end.

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NOW AND THEN.

CHAPTER I.

Our story opens with a moonlight night, as such stories are wont to open. The sky is perfectly clear, and the moon is shining away with her usual earnest aspect, pouring a flood of soft light through the quiet air, and over the fields and woods of the summer landscape. Silently the moonbeams rest on acres of dingy housetops, that cluster together to form large cities, or steal down into the dusky and dusty streets below; silently they find their way through every crevice, into the dark abodes of poverty and vice, like the universally diffused mercy of God. Far away the long line of the sea-coast, with its sands, and rocks, and light-houses, and foaming breakers, glimmers in the pale light, the mighty waste of waters stretching beyond, its bosom spanned with a glorious tract of light.

How many fond memories are there of such nights as this! There is a place sacred to such, in almost every heart. Yes, yonder man of care, he of plodding business; that other, the creature of a bold, perchance bad ambition; yon sordid miser; or that battered and half brutalized victim of vice—all have some such place. Even age, that whitens the locks, and dims the light of the eye, and quenches the fires of passion, and does so much to destroy all else, even age does not altogether blot out such memories.

Did it ever occur to you, my young reader, that your grandmother, who, ever since you can remember, is shrivelled into wrinkles, who has lost all her teeth, and wears a plain cap, and heavy gold spectacles, is sometimes thinking of moonlight nights, when you see her sitting, with folded hands and closed eyes, before the bright fire in the grate, and nodding her head in an unaccountable manner? Yes, it is of moonlight nights, such as you now enjoy so much—though of nights long gone by. Then the old lady had not lost her teeth, and did not wear spectacles and a cap. She was fully as fair as you, miss. Her step was as light, and her form as graceful, as she leaned fondly on the arm of your grandfather, while he spoke in a tone full of tenderness, so full as to bring new color to her cheeks, and brightness to her eyes.

It was during a walk on a lovely moonlight night, that your grandfather spoke lower than he was accustomed, and his words were few and broken. Your grandmother cried not a little, and though she tried to speak, she could not for some time; but when she did, it was to say "yes," as if in answer to some question; and then she raised her face to your grandfather, smiling, oh, how sweetly, through the tears that sparkled in the moon-beams. The old lady, you may be sure, has not forgotten that night, and never will.

You have never seen your grandfather; but you have often seen his broad-brimmed hat hanging in the closet, and the stout ivory-headed cane that he walked with in the latter part of his life, when the gout would allow him to walk at all. His picture, too, is over the mantel. He looks quite young in it, with a sky-blue coat, and powder in his hair, and so he was, for that picture was painted before his marriage.

To go on with my story. Nowhere on sea or land do the moon-beams fall more brightly than on the pretty place of Hampton, the residence of Mr. Worthington. The large old house, with its projecting windows, looked pale and loomed into twice its real size in the uncertain light. Gently the moonlight fell on the flowers in the terraced garden; gently on the close shaven grass of the lawn, and on the shadowing trees; and gently it stole down amid leaves and branches, throwing weird-looking shadows on the ground beneath.

Under one of these trees, a magnificent old oak—the patrician of trees—stood our hero and heroine, for we wish it to be understood that we have both—young, handsome, and looking *spirituelle* in the shadowy light. It was no new thing for Frank Hartley and Emily Worthington to be under that oak-tree. Together they had played under it as children; many summer afternoons had they whiled away on the rustic seat surrounding its trunk—Emily at her needle, and Frank reading aloud. The spot commanded a fine view of sunset, and a hundred times had they stood there to watch the god of day go down over the waters of the Chesapeake, which could be seen glittering on the verge of the horizon; and their moonlight walks (it must be confessed they were fond of these) usually terminated at this spot.

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This night was the last, for many a long day, that Frank and Emily would be together; and perhaps it was the consciousness of this that rendered them unusually silent, and led them to admire, more than ever, the quiet beauty of the scene spreading before them.

"How lovely Hampton looks by moonlight!" said Frank; "my new home will never be so dear to me, I am sure."

"Then why do you leave us, dear Frank?" asked Emily.

"Why, Emily," replied Frank, "why, Emily, a man (he was not twenty) must make a figure in the world. Society demands him—his country, patriotism, duty, and all that."

Emily made no reply, but she thought of the pleasant rides they had taken together since the day when her father had first placed her on a Shetland pony, and Master Frank had proudly led the horse over the lawn, giving her instructions for keeping her seat, and managing the bridle, and exhorting her not to be afraid; of pleasant rambles through the woods and fields in search of wild flowers when children, now dignified with the title of botanical excursions; of all the pleasant evenings spent in reading, singing, or chatting.

Perhaps Frank felt that he had shown too much eagerness to be gone from Hampton, for he said—

"I have been too long a burden to my dear aunt. She has made great sacrifices for me, and it is my duty, if possible, to repay her. I cannot refuse this advantageous offer of my uncle. I may, I never can, have another such opportunity of getting a profession, and I do not doubt I shall be very happy with my uncle in Philadelphia."

"But you do not know your uncle; you have never seen him," said Emily.

"Very true," replied Frank; "and he seems to have forgotten my existence until lately; but since he has thought of me again, and made this promising offer, I must overlook the past. Besides, Emily, I do not rely altogether on my uncle. Give me the opportunity, and I will make my own way in the world. Don't you see that, when I am admitted to practice, I shall take an office; I shall soon have clients, and business, and plenty of cases in the courts, and will be very successful? Then perhaps I shall go to Congress, and will make a figure there, and—and who knows what may happen? Why, Emily, I do not think I would make a bad president," and Frank stretched out his arm, as if the presidential chair were already within his reach.

Emily perfectly agreed with Frank in thinking that he would make a good president, and told him so. Then they talked about his future. It was concluded that he would become a very great man. He was to convince the block-headed jurymen; melt to tears the stony-hearted judges; sway to and fro, by the power of his eloquence, excited crowds, and in a general way take the world by storm, always being in the right, and doing the greatest possible amount of good. Emily was as sure of Frank's success as Frank himself was, and as much pleased with the imaginary prospect.

How dear is the sympathy of a genuine woman! How completely she sinks self, and makes the interest and happiness of another the sum total of her own. If Master Frank had been less occupied with brilliant visions, it might have occurred to him that all the perfections in the wide, wide world, that he could ever hope to possess, centred in the gentle being whose heart was then beating near to his; and that, in the possession of her, he would have a treasure that he might in vain seek for elsewhere. But it did not. And so he told Emily how charming she was by moonlight, looking in the pale beams like a nymph of Diana, or Diana's self; and then what his sorrow was at leaving Hampton, and of all things else at leaving her, but he hoped they would soon meet again. They agreed to write often, and then arm in arm returned to the house. Frank went to the library, and bade good-by to his kind friend Mr. Worthington, kissed Emily, who followed him on to the portico, and then mounting his horse, a gift of Mr. W.'s, rode off to his aunt's house, three miles distant.

Emily remained in the position in which Frank had left her, even after the iron gate that opened on to the lawn had closed after him with its heavy clank, and the sound of the horse's hoofs had died away, and then going to her chamber, and throwing herself down, wept profusely. Even this, the usual resource of young ladies in distress, and their almost certain relief, did not afford her much comfort. Poor Emily sobbed herself to sleep on that night; and the next morning, and for some days afterwards, presented herself, at table and elsewhere, with a pale face and red eyes.

We hear much of the painful emotion of those who leave home for a long absence; but I believe it is often not as great, or as permanent, as that experienced by friends left behind. The excitement of novelty, the necessity for exertion, the very motion of travel, all serve to divert the attention and relieve the surcharged bosom.

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But the fond ones at home have leisure to indulge in sad reflections, and every object around them awakens, by association, some remembrance of the absent one. The vacant chair and place at table, the silence now no longer broken by the cheerful voice and merry laughter, the restless and howling dog, that misses and seeks his master, constantly remind us of our loss.

So in the present instance; Emily grieved more for Frank than Frank for Emily, or anything he had left; for, as we before said, they had been almost inseparable companions from childhood. If she played or sang at the piano, Frank was not there to turn over the leaves of her music-book, or add his own voice when he thought hers not adequate to the full effect; when she sketched, there was no one to cut her pencil, or criticize her performance, and she almost sickened at the sight of her now orderly work-box, which it had been the daily habit of Mr. Frank to disarrange. Poor Carlo, too, missed his master so much, Emily feared he would never again recover his wonted vivacity. Carlo! He was a present from Frank, who, several years before, had invested all his pocket-money in the purchase of a big-headed Newfoundland pup, which had developed into a fine specimen of that very sagacious breed of dogs. It was quite a treat to see Emily with her arms around the neck of this dog, and her glossy locks mingling with his shaggy coat. In short, her herbarium, and books, and music were all neglected, and she seemed to take little interest in anything but the letters which occasionally came from Frank, full of himself and his new life.

Mr. Worthington was very much occupied with his estate, and his magazines and newspapers, but he could not be altogether unobservant of the state of Emily's mind. He resolved to divert her attention by putting into execution a plan he had long devised, but had determined to postpone to another year. This was to pass the winter in Washington, taking Emily with him. She was now eighteen, beautiful, accomplished, and Mr. Worthington bethought him that it was time to introduce her into that great world in which he was ambitious she should play a distinguished part.

Emily received the announcement, as most young ladies would, with delight. And the preparation afforded almost as much pleasure as the actual visit. There was so much consultation with Miss Maria Smith, the governess, and quite a large number of young ladies, Emily's confidential friends, so many orders dispatched to Baltimore for dresses and millinery work, and finally a trip to Baltimore in person, to superintend the indispensable preparations, that time passed away unobserved, and brought the advent of the Washington season.

The happy day arrived on which Emily and her father were to leave Hampton. The family coach rolled to the door, soon after an early breakfast; trunks were strapped on, bandboxes carefully stowed inside and out, with many cautions to the servants; and Emily, weeping and smiling, took leave of her governess and the housekeeper, and a hall full of sable servants, and took her place beside her father in the carriage, which was soon out of sight.

CHAPTER II.

Frank was soon established in the house of his uncle, a prominent member of a bar always famous. It will readily be imagined that this sudden change from the freedom of country life, from the green fields, and waving woods, and open sky of the country, for the city, the confinement, too, of a lawyer's office, was not agreeable to a youth of active and ardent temperament. Frank often sighed for his former liberty, as he sat in that little back office, darkened by a brick wall within four feet of its solitary window. He sometimes yawned heartily over the pages of Blackstone, and thought with regret of Shakspeare and Milton, of Burns and Scott.

But Mr. Frank was ambitious, and had plenty of industry and energy. He did not allow his first difficulties to affect his application to his new studies, or mistake a distaste of study for the evidence of a fine genius, as too many do. He knew that Blackstone himself was a good lawyer, and owed his success in life to his application to the law, although possessed of poetical taste and ability, and so he pressed on right vigorously.

Perseverance always has its reward. Frank soon grew fond of his law books. The clear analysis and luminous language of Blackstone delighted him. He even came to admire that bugbear to students, Sir Edward Coke. He appreciated, to some extent, the mighty grasp of principle that characterizes that profound reasoner, and the peculiar eloquence that occasionally breaks forth in the midst of some rigid argument or disquisition, and finds a forcible expression in a single sentence, or clause of a sentence.

Frank's uncle was pleased with his industry

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and loved the young man quite as well as he was capable of loving anybody. He was a short, spare man, with gray hair and shaggy gray eyebrows. His countenance was indicative of the intellect which he really possessed, but was so cold and impassible, that one could with difficulty imagine that it had ever been moved by aught of human passion or feeling. And indeed it was very seldom that he had displayed either. When death deprived Frank of both his parents, he inquired after the orphan, and learning that he was in the care of a maternal aunt, took no further notice of him. It was not until he felt somewhat the infirmity of age, that his thoughts turned again to his brother's child, with the resolve to make him the successor to his business, and the heir of his fortune. It was this that had brought Frank Hartley from the village in Maryland, where his aunt resided, and from the friends among whom his earliest days were passed.

In the dingy bachelor establishment of Mr. Hartley, senior, everything moved with the greatest regularity and punctuality. Breakfast, dinner, and tea were served at the same hour, day after day, and month after month. At 7 o'clock in the morning, Frank was expected to present himself in the little parlor, where the breakfast-table was spread, and where his uncle invariably sat in heavy gold spectacles, reading the morning's news; and at eleven o'clock in the evening, he lit his candle and retired to his scantily furnished chamber in the third story, with its brown calico curtains, white counterpane, and heavy black bureau.

Heavily enough passed the interval between eight o'clock A. M. and eleven o'clock P. M. during the first few months, to our poor student, and bright was the gleam shed by the letters from home that came to cheer these gloomy hours. Frank had numerous correspondents. His aunt wrote, and Emily and a score of village friends; so he knew all that passed at home, in the village, at Hampton, and all the country round.

When Emily told him of the projected visit to Washington, Frank heartily sympathized with her, and several letters passed between them full of the subject. And then Emily's letters came with the Washington postmark, and were full of Washington life. There was a description of the avenues and the Capitol, and the President's house, and the Patent Office, and a great many other wonders. She had been to Mount Vernon; she had seen the President; she had been in the Supreme Court where the judges wear black gowns, and look *so* dignified; and in both Houses of Congress, where there was no great amount of dignity. Of all places, Emily said, Washington was the most charming. It was so delightful to see the officers in uniform, and foreign ministers, and *attachés;* and so many fine ladies and gentlemen, and so many odd ones too, from all parts of the Union. It was delightful to go to the President's levees, and still more to those brilliant parties where one sees everybody that has pretensions to being anybody.

It was evident her inexperienced little head was quite turned, and no wonder, if the accounts Master Frank received were true. "You should have seen Emily at Mrs. Adam's, on Thursday evening," wrote Ned Tomlinson; "she was, decidedly, the prettiest girl in the room, the observed of all observers. You ought to see the honorables doing the agreeable to her, bald-headed old fellows, 'pon honor."

Frank read her name, Miss Emily W——, as among the guests at the Russian ambassador's, who gave the great ball of the season. There was a full description of her dress in the Washington "Mirror." How charming she must have looked! How Frank would like to have seen her at the Russian ambassador's, in simple white, with scarce any ornament in her glossy dark hair. He wondered how she would look at Mrs. Brinton's, a lady who gave handsome parties, and whose house Frank visited a great deal; for his uncle, satisfied with his application to his books, began to loosen the tight rein which he had at first kept on the young man, and he went a good deal into society, which he enjoyed very much, and where he was a prodigious favorite. She was certainly prettier than Miss Clara Wenthinell, with great black eyes, and curly black hair, and very red cheeks; she was quite as witty as Miss Caroline Roberett; but Frank debated whether Miss Mary Benson, with very arch eyes of an uncertain color, and a profusion of light brown hair, and a thousand nameless winning ways, was not altogether more attractive than Emily.

Indeed, if the truth must be told, Frank was so taken up with Miss Benson as not to observe that Emily's letters now came but seldom; and was not at all jealous to see the name of a Mr. Euston creeping into them, the Hon. Charles Euston, of Alabama. Frank constantly saw his name in the reports of Congressional proceedings, and read some pretty fierce attacks on him, in a journal politically opposed. Perhaps he was not sorry to be rid of the task of replying to them.

Master Frank, we have above hinted, chose to imagine himself in love with Miss Benson.

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This passion lasted for three months, and our hero deemed himself a model of constancy.

But who can resist fate? Frank was cured of this passion by falling in love with a lady quite unlike Miss Benson, a lady of the Flora McIvor style.

While this passion was at its height, Frank received a letter from Mr. Worthington, speaking of Emily's marriage to Mr. Euston. It inclosed an elegant little note from Emily herself. One could almost tell, from the appearance of that note, that she blushed when she wrote it. It only said to Frank, her dear and early friend, that she would be happy, very happy, if he could be at her wedding.

It must be confessed that these letters gave Mr. Frank some uneasiness; not that he was in love with Emily—oh, no; how should he be? He knew her too well, that intelligent, trusting, warm-hearted girl. She was but a woman, not a goddess; a very different person from Miss Digby, so grand and mysterious, with large beautifully rounded arms, and dark eyes of such unfathomable depth; oh, *she* was a person to love indeed. Still Frank felt uncomfortable. He experienced a vague sense of loss, or loss of something loved and cherished, he pined a little, and for nearly a week the charms of Miss Digby had not their wonted power over him.

Frank did not go to Emily's wedding. He wrote to her wishing her a great deal of happiness, and read the announcement of her marriage in the papers with praiseworthy composure. He even determined to throw himself at the feet of Miss Digby, who was about ten years his senior, on that very evening, pour out his bursting heart, and beg that queen to continue in her maiden condition until he, Frank, should be the successful lawyer he hoped to be, and then to bless him with her divine self.

Miss Digby never looked more royal than at Mrs. Bingham's, on that very night, and Frank felt his hour was come. He would lead the lady of his heart into the conservatory that opened out of the ball-room, and there, away from the heat and crowd, and glaring lights, under the deep sky with its silent stars, he would pour out his love, and receive his fate.

But, alas for human resolves! As Frank, with Miss Digby on his arm, passed into the conservatory, a little angel, in the most delicate pink, with the fairest neck in the world, and brightest eyes and smile, with a face where "the lily and the rose" ever vied for the mastery, brushed out from among the flowers like a scared partridge, and disappeared among the dancers. Poor Miss Digby! from that moment her influence waned. The conservatory was not the scene of that passionate declaration, which, like millions of other things, was near being, but was not. If the stars that are ever peering down on this restless earth, and winking away in their silent mysterious manner, expected anything of the kind, they were disappointed; though doubtless they could console themselves for their loss by looking into the odd doings of mortals other than those we are concerned with in the present story.

(To be continued.)

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LETTERS LEFT AT THE PASTRY-COOK'S:: BEING THE CLANDESTINE ...
Mathew, Horace
Godey's Lady's Book (1848-1854); Jun 1854; 48, American Periodicals
pg. 499

LETTERS LEFT AT THE PASTRY-COOK'S:

BEING THE CLANDESTINE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN KITTY CLOVER AT SCHOOL, AND HER "DEAR, DEAR FRIEND" IN TOWN.

EDITED BY HORACE MAYHEW.

THE SIXTH LETTER LEFT.

(Dated April the 9th.)

SHOWING WHAT HAPPENED ON A VERY IMPORTANT DAY, AND WHAT KITTY THOUGHT OF SOME OF HER MASTERS.

To-day, dearest Nelly, is the 14th of February. Not a girl, I believe, in the whole school, slept a wink last night; ever since sunrise, there has been such a humming and buzzing, exactly as you hear at church when the service is just over. I believe all the girls are mad. No one seems to care for fines or forfeits. What is twopence or sixpence, or a hundred lines of the "History of England," so long as a dear sweet valentine is smuggled into the college? and it requires all the art which a woman has of smuggling, to pass a letter through the examination of this place. I declare it's worse than the custom-house, when you land from Boulogne. Every one who comes in has his pockets searched, and the Lady Principal stands on the staircase all day, watching for the postman. She little knows, however, that he has been bribed (*with half a dozen* SILVER THIMBLES) to slip all the letters under the door without that tell-tale "tat-tat;" or that Susan has earned in one day more ribbons and handkerchiefs than a year's wages would buy her, simply by having a little human feeling. Snapp and the Lady Principal were never fluttered with such hopes, I 'll be bound, when they were young, although it is so long ago they may well be excused for forgetting it.

But it does not matter, Nelly, their locking us up in a state of siege. Rosy May has got a beauty sent round her bottle of strengthening mixture by the doctor's handsome young man; and Lucy Wilde found such a duck tucked in her stockings from the wash. And those impudent fellows next door have pelted us over the garden wall with half a dozen all tied on to a piece of string precisely as if it were the tail of a kite that had got entangled in the trees.

And then, Nelly (mind, this is a secret), there came a new Sunday dress for me (a beautiful shot silk, with all kinds of colors, just like mother-o'-pearl); and what do you think? There, inside it, hid up the sleeve, was such a love of a valentine for your dear, happy, happy Kitty! Oh gracious! when I opened it, I saw two sweet little doves, as white as bride-cake, caged in a net of beautiful silver paper, hovering over a large heart, smothered, dear, in the sweetest roses! It was so pretty, you can't tell; and I was *so* happy I could have gone to bed and have cried the rest of the afternoon. How kind of *him* to think of me on such a day! Bless him! How foolishly I love him to be sure, and I should be very wicked if I didn't; for it was only yesterday I flung the paring of an apple three times round my head, and when it had fallen on the ground, there it was in the form of the dear letter "S!" You understand, dearest; but not a word.

Snapp had one. It was inside an orange that was thrown at her from over the wall. Those impudent boys again! She tore it up most indignantly, and flung the bits away with a burst of eloquence about "the vulgar ribaldry of such ignorant, witless insults." We picked up the bits afterwards, and, putting them together, found they formed the ugliest picture that ever was seen, of an old witch riding on a birch-broom, with a big bottle in her hand. It was too bad, but we have pasted the pieces on a sheet of paper, and intend to keep it by us to spite her with some day, if she is unkind to us.

The fact is, the whole house is crazy. If it was breaking-up day, there couldn't be more fun and less discipline. Even that long piece of dryness, Miss Twigg, has been caught laughing several times, and the servants have been giggling up and down stairs, and all over the house, and

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running every minute to the door, until at last Mrs. Rodwell has put the chain up, and says she'll answer the door herself. She's in such a passion that I shouldn't like to be one of those poor girls who hav'n't paid for their last half year, and to be taken up before her!

Even that curious old Mr. Penn has become touched with the infection. He has been setting us the drollest copies, about "Faint Heart ne'er won Fair Lady," and "Though Lost to Sight, to Memory Dear," and such like; exceeding even his usual eccentricities.

He is the funniest little specimen you ever saw, Nelly, and ought to sit to have his portrait taken in China. He would make a capital Dresden ornament, for he is a very great curiosity; but in his present shape he is much more curious than ornamental. He is our writing-master; but his accomplishments go far beyond pot-hooks and hangers; for he teaches us, also, arithmetic, mathematics (much we understand about them!), and Latin (we all like "*Amo*, I love"—I think of Sidney as I conjugate it), and elocution; besides drawing to the juniors. Poor Penn! His is a sad life, Nell. He was brought up with expectations of having a large fortune. Those expectations are all gone now; for you cannot read the slightest hope in his care-worn face. His whole appearance implies a struggle to live. Every article of his dress speaks of a long fight with poverty. His coat looks so thin that you imagine, if it were brushed, it would be swept clean away like so much dust. It is buttoned close up to his throat, and what you see of his linen is clean, though rough and jagged at the edges, like the leaves of a book that's been badly cut. His boots are patched to that extent that, when it has been raining very hard, he doesn't like drying them at the fire, for fear of our laughing at the numerous patches about them. His hat—but never mind about his dress, Nelly; for I feel a sort of shame in counting the darns and stitches about this poor fellow's appearance. Suffice it to say, he always looks the gentleman in the midst of his shabbiness, and that he wins the respect of us giddy little girls, even in spite of his bad clothes. The latter, I can tell you, is no small recommendation in a girl's school.

He is clever, and I would sooner learn of him than of that ponderous Professor Drudge, whose explanations are so high-flown that we never can see what they mean, *even by standing on tip-toe*. At first, all manner of tricks were played upon old Penn. He never could find his spectacles—his knife was always mislaid—his quills were always stolen—but he never grumbled or made the slightest complaint. Last winter he used repeatedly to leave the room. We could not fancy why or where he went, until one day he dropped his pocket-handkerchief. It was nothing but holes and rags—almost as bad as the handkerchief I have seen the clown in a pantomime wipe his eyes with when he has pretended to be crying. He had been ashamed to withdraw it in our presence; and well he might, for on my word, without meaning any harm, we should all have burst out laughing, if he had. We could not have helped it, Nelly. You never saw such a thing, dear! "It was not a pocket-handkerchief," said that great stupid Meggy Sharpe, "so much as a Penn-wiper!"

Well! as we were all laughing at its poverty and comical appearance—you must have laughed yourself, Nelly—who should come in but Blight? In a few strong words she made us ashamed of our unfeeling mirth, and brought the color still more to our tingling cheeks by running up stairs and bringing down one of her own pocket-handkerchiefs, which she bade us slip unperceived into poor old Penn's coat pocket. We watched him from the window. The old gentleman pulled out his handkerchief as soon as he left the house, but, perceiving the substitution, his head dropped, poor fellow, and we saw him with the handkerchief held up to his eyes until he turned the corner.

Ever since then, no more tricks have been played with our writing-master. His poverty, unlike with most men, has been his friend—and a very good friend, too. Contributions have been dropped in the same poor-box for his relief, until the old gentleman has grown comparatively quite a dandy; one of Noble's black satin aprons has found him in stocks for months, and Blight is always knitting comfortable muffetees, slippers, and chest-protectors for him in the winter. We picture to ourselves the old man emptying his pockets when he gets home, and his surprise at finding the little gifts (and cake sometimes) they contain. We are happy in the pleasure we know we give him. He never says a word, but merely looks his thanks. We feel his gratitude in the increased kindness we receive from him. He calls us his "angels," and we know directly what he means; if he said more, O Lord! how we should all cry, and he, perhaps, more than any of us.

He is here, Nelly, mostly all day long; but doesn't dine with us. The Lady Principal sends him out a plateful, heaped up with almost insulting profusion, as if she were sending it out to a beggar. Perhaps she isn't wrong, however, for

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it is all eaten. He carries down the tray himself, that none may see how clean his plate has been polished.

I need not tell you, Nell, dear, that we all are fond of poor Penn. He is so kind, so gentlemanly, so patient, acting to us more like a parent than a teacher. Besides, he sets us the strangest copies, the oddest problems—things never heard of in a school before—but reconciling us to our tasks by making us laugh, and interesting the dullest pupil. You won't credit it; but that conceited thing Twigg fancies him in love with her. She dresses out her ringlets as long as spaniel's ears, and puts on cherry neck-ribbons when he comes. All day long is she pestering him to mend her pen, and to explain away difficulties about x in algebra; just as if a man could be bothered into love! Penn takes it all very good-temperedly; but I imagine it would bring his wig prematurely to the grave, if he was told that he was going to marry Twigg.

None of us can tell what pittance the Princesses' College gives for the life-service of such a man. Not a tenth, I dare say, of what they give to Herr Hullabullützer. Such fuss, dear, as is made for the Herr's reception! The room is heated to a certain degree of nicety, the light is subdued, sherry and biscuits are ready for his refreshment, tea and cake (*our cake*) brought in afterwards, and the young ladies kept waiting in succession every quarter of an hour, so as not to lose a moment of his valuable time. And you should only see him lounging in the arm-chair; his little fourpenny-piece of a watch placed before him, as if the object of his visit was to follow its hands, and not our fingers. Why, he looks, dear, the handsomest personification of contentment, hair-oil, and conceit, that a foreigner ever *bamboozled* people with in this country. His shirt is light pink, and perforated like an open-work jam tart. His wristbands are turned back nearly as much as the sheet on the pillow of a bed. His head would make a beautiful block for a French hair-dresser's window; and he has sufficient chains and miniature pistols, donkeys, cannons, and dogs dangling round his neck to start in business a Jew peddler. He dozes one-half the time; but then it is a reverie—the meditation of genius. The other half he plays with his glossy curls or his whitey-brown moustache, so he may well be excused if he doesn't know exactly to a minute what air his pupil is playing. It's true, he scarcely gives himself the trouble to correct us when we are wrong; but then he teaches the young princesses! and so we should not expect him to be over patient with little chits of school-girls. *He* is an artist: poor Penn is only a man of intellect. *He* goes to the palace three times a week; poor Penn has only been to college; so the two are not to be compared.

Once, however, when your dearest Kitty was making more noise over the "Battle of Prague" than has ever been made over the battle of Waterloo, the ringleted Herr caught up her hand, and said, in a voice that melted with the sweetness of barley sugar, "I can-not perr-mit such soft litt-tle fin-gerrs to murr-derr har-mo-nie;" and—and, dearest, I think Kitty's hand felt the smallest possible baby's-touch of a squeeze.

I had on your pretty turquoise ring at the time, and since then every girl has wished me to lend it her for her music lesson. Just as if it was the ring that!!!———

Fraulein Pinchinhertz is quite sentimental over the handsome Herr. She sits in the room during the lessons, looking and listening with all her soul in her eyes, and talking German in the *softest* manner. But the Herr admires his boots infinitely more than he does her.

But, bother take it, there's the bell for tea. Good-bye, my darling Nelly, and do not forget the toffe you promised to send to—

Your fondest KITTY CLOVER.

P. S. I will show you the valentine when I come home. Tell me, have you had any? Pray, how many?

P. S. It is very strange—some one sang under our windows last night, "Wilt thou love me then as now?" I wonder if it was *him?*

P. S. I have had this more than three weeks in my pocket, waiting for an opportunity to post it.

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LETTERS LEFT AT THE PASTRY-COOK'S:: BEING THE CLANDESTINE ...
Mayhew, Horace
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Aug 1854; 49, American Periodicals
pg. 127

LETTERS LEFT AT THE PASTRY-COOK'S:

BEING THE CLANDESTINE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN KITTY CLOVER AT SCHOOL, AND HER "DEAR, DEAR FRIEND" IN TOWN.

EDITED BY HORACE MAYHEW.

THE EIGHTH LETTER LEFT.

(Dated May 1st.)

SHOWING WHAT TOOK PLACE AT SCHOOL ON A MOST IMPORTANT OCCASION.

THERE is no school to-day, Nelly. We have got a holiday, and I mean to enjoy it by writing to you, dearest.

My pretty Eleanor must know that it has been our *confirmation morning*. At last they are all off; and it has been such a busy time of crying and laughing—of such frivolity one moment, and hysterical excitement the next—that I am not sorry they are gone. I thought they never would be ready! The fuss began as early as six o'clock. First of all the clergyman came—then the hairdresser (though he styles himself on his cards "*artiste en cheveux*")—then a breathless milliner—then a puffing shoemaker—then more milliners and more shoemakers—so that really it has been nothing but *hurry, flurry, worry, skurry*, ever since we opened our eyes this morning. The door-knocker has been going incessantly for four hours—and there seemed to be a competition between it and the girls' tongues as to which of the two should make the greater noise. So if my letter throbs with a slight headache, Nell, you will know exactly on whose head to lay the fault.

To begin, Lizzy's dress was too short, and Jessie's was so long that it might have run an express train (Meggy Sharpe said) all the way to Brentford! More than this, the two Suetts could not get their frocks to meet, and it was laughable to see them running about, begging of every one to help to lace them. No one's dress seemed to fit, excepting Amy Darling's; but I believe, if Amy was to try on a barrister's silk gown, that by some miracle it would fit her as beautifully as the dresses in the *Petit Courrier des Dames!*

Poor Mary Owen seemed in a dream. It made me unhappy to notice her. She was to be dressed in an ugly, thick, bed-gowny garment, but it was thought "quite good enough for her." Her cheeks were transparently pale. Her large eyes, so full of sorrow, were lit up with a strange radiance as if a light was burning behind them. It put me in mind of the light I have sometimes seen burning over a tomb; and as I saw Mary's lips move as if in silent prayer, the picture of a tomb in some gloomy vault, with the dark figure of a woman stretched over it, rose without my helping it before my imagination. I thought Mary was the mourner, and the tomb was the one in which were buried all her hopes of happiness in this world.

A warm color flushed over the poor girl's face (like the tint of a cathedral window falling on some marble statue) when she first noticed the difference between her shroud-like frock and the gay dresses of her companions; but it quickly passed away, *like a bad thought one 's been ashamed to think of.* After she had assisted to dress Amy, she was going to put on her ugly gown, when Amy pushed it aside and brought forth *one just like her own*, made by the same *dressmaker* out of the *same materials*, and sent by her mamma for "dear Mary."

Then, Nelly, poor Owen was quite overcome—weeping, reproaching, and caressing Amy by turns—saying first "it was too bad of her," and then that "it was too good of her," and hanging round her neck as if she was the only one dear object on earth she had to cling to—and doing it all so touchingly that in less time than you can put on your bonnet we were all crying, and I firmly believe (so contagious is goodness, Nelly) that every girl present was angry with herself that she had not done the same thing, and wished in atonement to pull off her beautiful dress, and offer it to Mary.

This crying took so long that there would not have been a piece of dry muslin carried to church that day, if the Lady Principal had not come up stairs to inquire into the reason of the delay. There she found the *artiste* tearing his hair (after the old approved French recipe for *désespoir*) in such a liberal manner as to soon require the use of one of his own wigs; there she heard the governesses exhausted with scolding; there she saw the girls with red eyes and "*rats' tails*" that "would be a disgrace to any school." Oh, dear! oh, dear! what a storm there was after our little shower!

It was a lovely sight, Nelly, these twelve

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young girls in pure white, with their long lace veils—many of them pretty enough for brides—and all of them beautified for the occasion, although, except with Mary and Amy, I do not think there *was much thought of religion in their souls.* It seemed to me that their thoughts were all wrapt up in their fine clothes.

Carney was the only ugly one, sneaking and prying behind her veil, as if it could conceal from heavenly eyes her want of truthfulness. And those proud creatures—Noble and Peacock! May I always be as poor as one of our Saturday's dinners, if they hadn't got *Honiton veils and white bouquets to distinguish them from the rest!* On an occasion like the present, I think they might have kept their pride in their drawers at home—*n'est-ce-pas,* Nelly?

Just as they were starting, the Lady Principal came into the room to address "a few words of motherly admonition to her dear children." She had scarcely got half way through her first sentence of big words—every one of which rolled along as heavily as an omnibus on a breaking-up day—when she espied Mary's graceful appearance. She grew crimson at the sight, and, calling her forward, inquired, in a voice as ragged and as cutting as a saw, "Pray, Miss Owen, inform me why you have presumed to wear other than the costume I considered suited to your *position.* What new pride, I should like to know, is this, my fine young lady?"

Before Mary could stammer out a word, Amy had darted forward, and was "telling the whole tale." The dress had arrived too late to consult the Lady Principal; she was very sorry it had not been done; if it was any one's fault, it was hers; and she begged that the punishment might not be visited upon any one else, but upon her alone. As the noble girl spoke, the white veil round her head shone like a bright fleecy cloud, and her voice sounded in my ears like an angel's that was speaking out of it.

There was no time for lecturing, or the indulgence of spite or revenge, or else I am sure Mary would have had, after all, to wear the white smock; and as for Amy, I tremble, dear, like a dish of blancmange, to think what tortures might have been in store for her!

Well, after pivoting them round and round to see that all was tidy, and everybody running to fetch something that had been forgotten, the chosen twelve were pronounced "ready," and divided in two parties, six for each yellow fly.

At this point, Mrs. Dove made her appearance in the room. Her eyes were swollen, as though she had only just left off crying. She was dressed in the deepest mourning, and as she pressed her baby boy to her bosom, she looked a sad picture of woman's acutest suffering. There was something so solemn, so pathetic in the contrast of her dark widowhood amongst these youthful bridal figures, that awe stopped every tongue, and we suddenly stood still, looking pitifully on her grief, and for the moment becoming sharers in it. She did not say a word, but somehow her sorrow spoke to us with the eloquence of a touching sermon. Each step, each look was a heart-rending appeal to our sympathies; to gaze upon her was to feel filled with charity. I daren't look round, but I am sure there wasn't a dry eye in the room.

She placed the sleeping infant in Blight's arms, and joined the party that was going to church; for it seems that, though married, she had never been confirmed, and that she had secretly prepared for the ceremony.

Poor struggling widow! There at least was faith and hope, for without them what would her life be worth? No finery—no Honiton laces—no love of show had urged her to her present act—no tender exhortations of a young and handsome clergyman had prepared her spirit, and yet, Mary dear, from my heart I prayed that, when I was confirmed, it might be as she was—in *humble religious sincerity and my common everyday dress.*

Oh! here they are back. I must run to hear all about it. Excuse this abrupt flight of

Yours, Nelly love,
The same as ever,
KITTY.

P. S. The Lady Principal is delighted. The Reverend Mr. Meltam (his hair is parted *so* beautifully down the middle, dear) complimented her upon the "extremely good behavior of her pupils." The whole twelve, and Mrs. Dove too, are invited to take supper with her this evening.

P. S. I don't mind telling *you,* Nelly, we are going to have a supper to-night; not a common supper with the governesses—off stale sandwiches and small beer—but a *snug little supper up stairs in our own bedroom*—sweets smuggled in a fright, and eaten all of a tremble. The excitement is the best part of it, though I must confess justice is generally done to the sausage-rolls, the banbury-puffs, and the other dainties provided. We wait until Blight has gone her visiting rounds. When everything is quiet, Lucy Wilde or Rosy Mary begins telling some horrible story, often reciting an entire novel in a quarter of an hour. As soon as we are sure all spies are asleep, and that there 's not even a mouse stirring, the wax-ends, stuck into pomatum-pots, are lighted

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(unless the moon graciously gives us the light of her countenance), and the feasting begins. There are only six girls in our room—Wilde, Mary, Sharpe, St. Ledger, Embden, and my worthy self. Fraulein sleeps in a little closet, about as big as a china-cupboard, called a dressing-room; but she is a good hard sleeper, and never wakes or hears anything of our midnight revels. Once, however, I thought I heard her giggling under the bedclothes, when Sharpe was telling a frightful German tragedy. Perhaps she was enjoying the fun quietly by herself, though why she should laugh, when every one else was shivering with fear over the frightful love incidents, is more than I can tell. Well, Nelly, the banquet is spread on one of the girl's beds, round which we all sit, somewhat in tailor fashion. There is not much variety in our entertainments, as we can only send to the confectioner's; but it does not matter. If we had roasted peacocks, or sweetmeats prepared by nuns, or all the rich things in the Lord Mayor's larder, we could not enjoy them more. It is such rare fun, and worth any of the grand dinners you go to, Nelly. Sometimes an alarm is given, and, quicker than any conjuror's trick, the wax-ends are extinguished, the goodies disappear no one knows where, and in less than a minute *every one is fast asleep.* It 's very strange, but Blight, let her call as loud as she will, *never can wake us.* This trick, however, is sometimes sadly annoying. The rapidity of the change crumbles the light pastry all into nothing, and in the quickness of the transformation one cannot always recollect *whose turn it is to be helped next.* Besides, there is the danger, as you jump into bed in the dark, of falling upon half-a-dozen "turnovers," which, in the hurry of the surprise, have been swept in between your sheets to get them out of the way. On one occasion I saw St. Ledger smeared all over with jam, until she looked like a large "rolly-polly pudding." How we did laugh, to be sure! As our suppers are *rather rich,* we generally have a little *eau de Cologne* sprinkled on a lump of sugar—just sufficient to scare away the nightmare—though we prefer the essence of peppermint (when we can get it) mixed with a little water. You can't think how nice and warming it is! To-night Embden has got a cucumber and some maids-of-honor, and we expect a rare treat. By-the-by, Nelly, when you come and see me, remember our supper-table. Bring something sweet and rich with you, and put into your pocket some wax-ends. Our stock of chandlery is rather low at present. Come soon, there 's a dear pet.

P. S. By-the-by, a lump of sugar and a few drops of *eau de Cologne* sprinkled over it, is a capital recipe for making the eyes bright.

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PERFECT LOVE.
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Oct 1855; 51, American Periodicals
pg. 342

PERFECT LOVE.

PERFECT love has this advantage in it, that it leaves the possessor of it nothing further to desire. There is one object, at least, in which the soul finds absolute content, for which it seeks to live, or dares to die. The heart has, as it were, filled up the moulds of the imagination; the truth of passion keeps pace with, and outvies the extravagance of mere language. There are no words so fine, no flattery so soft that there is not a sentiment beyond them that is impossible to express, at the bottom of the heart, where true love is. What idle sounds the common phrases, *adorable creature*, *divinity*, *angel*, are! What a proud reflection it is to have a feeling answering to all these rooted in the breast, unalterable, unutterable, to which all other feelings are light and vain! Perfect love reposes on the object of its choice like the halcyon on the wave, and the air of Heaven is around it!

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ROSES AND CABBAGES; OR, THE USEFUL AND THE BEAUTIFUL.
Bartram
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Nov 1855; 51, American Periodicals
pg. 440

ROSES AND CABBAGES; OR, THE USEFUL AND THE BEAUTIFUL.

BY BARTRAM.

Charley Anderson was discontented. And who is not discontented? The millionaire who has accumulated immense hoards of wealth, and amassed sums far beyond what his most sanguine hopes had pictured, is not satisfied. The statesman and the warrior who have climbed the ladder of fame to its summit, to whom nations render homage, are not content with what they have achieved. The author and the poet, though they read their praises in a thousand journals, are not satisfied; neither is the village belle, though a dozen lovers are sighing at her feet. Charlie Anderson, as we said at first, was not satisfied, was not content, though he could hardly assign any reason to himself why he was not. He had a kind and wealthy father, who supplied him very liberally with money, and a mother who loved him dearly, for he was their only child. Charles Anderson had been in fact a spoiled child, and was nearly a spoiled man. Having never enjoyed the advantages of early poverty and adversity, the school of great men and great achievements, but having from infancy moved smoothly on in conscious security and plenty, he had acquired an indolent forceless habit of mind which was more unworthy from the fact that he was naturally endowed with fine abilities.

But it was no secret regret for wasted opportunities and misspent time that made him discontented at present. He had arrived at that age when men think very seriously on the subject of matrimony, and it was matrimonial thoughts which now disturbed him. He had reasoned or fancied himself into the conclusion that he could not be happy without a wife, and he was determined to get married as soon as he could. He was not in love by any means.

"As for love," said he to his grandmother, with whom he was discussing the subject, "I can love just whom I choose, for that is a matter more of association than anything else, and I am old enough now to let reason have some hand in the business. A man is much more influenced by feeling before he is twenty-five than after that age. But here I am twenty-seven years old, almost an old bachelor; I must bestir myself, and get a rib."

"And Charley," replied his grandmother, "be sure that you marry a girl that can make a wife in fact, a helpmate; don't throw yourself away on one of these fine stuck-up young ladies, who can do nothing but dress, and play on the piano, and read novels, and talk about moonlight. Get a wife that can make shirts and puddings, and make up beds, and raise chickens and cabbages, and make home comfortable. Girls are different now from what they used to be when I was young. There is Susan Prim; now she is a nice, quiet, industrious girl, just the very one to make a good domestic wife."

But Charlie's mother, who had rather higher notions than his grandmother, for the family had been "rising" since she was a girl, put in a word.

"I hope that, when Charley does marry, he will get a wife whom he will not be ashamed to see in society. I would prefer that he should get a lady who is qualified to move in any circle. He does not need a wife to work for him, but one whom he will be proud to compare with the best in the land, and such a one he is entitled to."

Charley said no more upon the subject at the time, but he had his own opinion in relation to the subject. He felt perfectly confident that he could follow his reason entirely in the important matter, and never once thought of the possibility of falling in love. He imagined that it was possible for a young man of susceptibility and refinement to enter into the marriage contract with as much coolness and deliberation as he would take a railroad contract or go into the tea trade, and having escaped, as he thought, the dangers of youthful impetuosity—for he had been in love once—he would be very calm and cautious in choosing a partner for life. He had read, in many newspapers and moral essays, the solution of the momentous problem, "how to choose a wife." Many wise saws had he perused wherein industry, modesty, meekness, domestic qualifications, &c., were lauded, and fashionable accomplishments decried, the spinning-wheel exalted and the piano abused; the authors of which advice had of course followed the same in their own cases, or more probably could speak with more certainty from having experienced the evils of not doing so. However, Charley

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was strong in the belief that he would exercise great caution in choosing for himself a wife, and he was determined to have a good one.

Charley Anderson was a desirable match for any girl in the village, and so he knew or thought himself to be. He was a fine-looking, healthy young man, with brown hair and bright, gray, intelligent eyes; and he had in his own right, besides a rich father, a considerable fortune. He had received a classical education, and possessed easy and graceful manners, and great conversational powers. So, with an ordinary amount of vanity, and forgetting the unaccountable nature of women, especially young ones, he imagined that all he had to do was to make his selection according to the rules of philosophy and prudence, then say the word, and the thing would be done. He was acquainted with all the young ladies in the village, and had been flirting with some of them for years, but he was determined to set out now *de nous* with a serious matrimonial intention, to inspect and observe closely the qualities and merits of those young ladies whom he might consider marriageable.

Susan Prim was considered by most of the old folks as one of the best "chances" for a young man in the whole village. She was a perfect specimen of the "practical," and a very good specimen of the "material" was Susan. She was a bouncing, flaxen-haired, rosy-cheeked girl, who had a great reputation for domestic qualifications; just such a lassie as would have been the *beau ideal* of Dr. Johnson, but could scarcely have taken the eye of Byron or Napoleon. Charley was well acquainted with the family, and did not hesitate, on the recommendation of his grandmother, to make his matrimonial visits in this direction; he wanted to try if he could not "like" Susan well enough to marry her. He was already acquainted with her, but had never looked upon her with the eye matrimonial.

Susan was the pride of her mother. Mrs. Prim never failed to show off to company the eminently useful and practical abilities of her daughter. One day, shortly after Charley had determined, as above stated, to enter forthwith into the matrimonial condition, he took dinner with the Prims. This was a first rate opportunity to learn the merits of Miss Susan.

"Try some of these pickles, Mr. Anderson; they are some of Susan's own making; you will find them excellent; she is a great hand to make pickles."

"Really, Mrs. Prim, they are very fine, and Miss Susan deserves great credit for them."

"She is quite an adept in all these things. You needn't blush and be ashamed of it, daughter. Here's some beets that she raised herself, and she made the jelly you are eating with your turkey. I am quite proud of Sue, and take great credit to myself for her raising. She is one of the most industrious girls I ever saw; she knows how to manage things about the house as well as I do myself. I raised her in the old-fashioned way, to make herself useful."

Various articles, especially in the pudding and pie line, were found to be the productions of Miss Susan's industry. Indeed, she was evidently an excellent housekeeper, could make her own dresses, made the finest shirts for her father, and took pride in having everything about the place marvellously neat. She bore herself very modestly under the encomiums of her mother, and Charley began to think that she was just the person to make a comfortable home. It was true she had not black hair or brown eyes, which he would have preferred, but then he could do very well without them, and he had half made up his mind to "put in" at Squire Prim's by the time dinner was over, after which the young folks were shown into the parlor.

The house was finely situated, and from its windows could be seen a very beautiful landscape; the situation was the merest accident, for old Prim never once thought of beauty in selecting its site. It was summer; the whole vegetable creation was rejoicing in new life; the flowers were budding forth in glorious profusion everywhere. Everywhere, did I say? not so; our hero could discover none in the front garden of Prim's house, in the place where flowers ought to be. Charley had a taste, or rather an eye and a nose for flowers, and he expected to see some of them in pots, or in the little front yard, but there were none, and what struck him as peculiar was the fact that, instead of roses and pinks, the practical hand of Miss Susan had planted there sage and beans and onions and cabbages. This he did not exactly like; it was carrying usefulness too far.

"What a beautiful view you have from this window!" said Charley.

"Yes," said Miss Susan.

"It seems to me that, if I were going to build a residence for myself, I would select a situation for beauty, as much or more than for any other advantage. Do you not think that the scenery which we are accustomed to contemplate has considerable influence in forming our minds and dispositions?"

"Yes."

"Most of the countries that have been dis-

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tinguished for great men and heroic actions, which have occupied a large place in the history of the world, and where the light of immortal genius has shone with the most brilliancy, are countries abounding in beautiful scenery, as Palestine, Greece, and Italy."

"Yes."

"I see you have a taste for poetry," said Charley, taking up a volume which "ornamented" the centre-table. "This is my favorite authoress, Mrs. Hemans. Her 'Pilgrim Fathers' is a poem not surpassed in any language or in any age!"

"Yes, she is a very good poet."

"It is strange that women have not excelled in poetry. It would seem that they are eminently qualified for this species of composition, having more sensibility, more delicacy of feeling, and more ready invention than men."

"Yes."

Charley looked out of the window; he saw browsing on the green hill-side a very fine herd of cattle; they made a picturesque appearance, and so he remarked. He had struck the right cord; this brought Miss Susan out.

"Yes, they are mighty fine cattle. Do you see that brown cow off by herself? That is one of the greatest cows that you ever saw; she gives gallons of milk every day; and there's another in the same flock that is almost as good. Pa got the breed from Cousin Joe Williams."

Charlie found Miss Susan perfectly at home on the subject of raising cows and calves and chickens, and the times and the modes of planting cabbages, &c. And after spending much time in this very useful discussion, he left her, with the promise of bringing her some rare cabbage-seed which his grandmother had recently received.

"Well, Charley," said his grandmother, "and so you spent the day at the Prims. How do you begin to like Miss Susan; she is a fine smart girl, isn't she?"

"Yes, grandma, she's smart enough, and a very good girl too."

"And I suppose you have been courting her all day?"

"Well, not exactly; the fact is"—

"Why what objection can you find to her now? You know you said you had outgrown foolish notions about loving pretty faces, and all that sort of thing."

"Why, the truth is, grandma, Miss Susan is a good enough girl, and I have no doubt would make a very industrious domestic wife, but she lacks mind and refined sentiment."

"There, you are now talking nonsense just like some young boy. What have sentiment and poetry and all that to do with getting married, keeping house, and having all things comfortable about you?"

"Why, you see, grandma, a man marries a wife not merely to provide for his comfort and domestic convenience, but as a companion and a friend. Man is twofold in his nature, animal and intellectual or spiritual, and he needs aliment for his soul as well as for his body. How is it possible for a man, who has any tastes or desires above mere sensual comforts, to enjoy the marriage state to its full extent with one who has no tastes similar to his own, and with whom he can have no community of sentiment? Woman was designed to be a helpmate to man, not merely in the provision of food and clothing, but in the higher and nobler aspirations of his soul. It is her province to animate him with lofty purposes, and incite him to honorable exertion, to sympathize with him in his triumphs, or soothe him in disappointment and sorrow."

"Well, well! Charley; that's all very fine. I am afraid that your mother and your college going have put some mighty flighty notions in your head. But mind me; you had better take my advice in this matter. There was your grandfather and me; I am sure we got along mighty well, and we never had any of your notions about sentiment and aspirations, and all that. But do as you please."

* * * * *

"Did you see Angelica Rosedale at church to-day?" said Mrs. Anderson to Charley, one Sunday. "She is a beautiful girl, isn't she?"

"Yes, she is a remarkably fine-looking young lady, and exceedingly graceful."

"She dresses with such excellent taste. That's a chance for you, Charley; you must go and see her."

"Yes, ma'am, I intend to call there to-morrow evening; I have not been to see her since they returned from the North."

"Old Rosedale is rich, you know, and the family is of the first blood. Angelina is the very girl to make a fine appearance in society. She is so very ladylike. She is worth looking after."

Accordingly, the next evening, after dressing himself with unusual care, Charley Anderson set out to visit Miss Angelina Rosedale. Arrived at the house, he passed through a very beautiful flower-garden, redolent with roses and violets and every other species of flower; and having knocked for admittance, was ushered into a splendidly furnished parlor, where he had to

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wait for a considerable time. At length Miss Angelina made her appearance, saluted Mr. Anderson with great dignity and grace, and sank upon a sofa with a languid, exhausted air. Her form was sylph-like, and very beautiful was her face; Charley thought he had never seen such a pretty lady before.

"And so you have been to the North again, Miss Angelina? I suppose our little town looks rather dull and dingy to you after visiting the splendid northern cities."

"Why really, Mr. Anderson, I don't know how you live in this little old place all through the summer. I think I should die if I were compelled to stay here."

"Oh, we manage to get along, after a fashion, with books and various little amusements. I suppose you had a pleasant trip."

"We had an unusually fine time this summer. Have you ever been at Saratoga? Oh, that is such a delightful place!"

"Did you ever spend much time there?"

"Only about two weeks. We made some very pleasant acquaintances there—the Squeezlephantums from New York, and the Tapewells of Philadelphia; they made quite a sensation; and there was Mr. Dootell, who, you know, is such an entertaining beau."

"I suppose you went to Niagara also."

"Oh, yes! We went there also, but did not stay long; the company was not so agreeable as at the springs. We only stayed there a day."

"But did you have time to see the falls sufficiently in so short a time?"

"Oh, you don't suppose we went there to look at the falls, do you?"

"Why, certainly, Miss Angelina; for what else?"

"Why, to see the people who were there, and to dance and enjoy one's self."

"But was you not filled with wonder at the sight of the mighty cataracts?"

"Oh, yes! Of course, I was," said Miss Angelina, recollecting herself, and quoting: "'It is one of the most sublime spectacles that the eye of man ever beheld, and fills the soul with emotions of grandeur ineffable. It impresses us with the majesty and omnipotence of the Creator, and our own littleness and insignificance;' but pa says they have more ways to cheat people out of their money there than any other place he ever was at."

"I suppose you attended the opera while in the city. You heard Mario and Grisi; did you not?"

"Oh, yes! Ah, what a splendid voice Mario has! It lifts one's soul to heaven to hear him; and how nobly Grisi acts, though I think," continued she, repeating the well-known criticism, "'that she falls far short of Mario as a musical performer.'"

"Did you all enjoy good health during your trip?"

"All of us but ma; she was sick at Newport, and I was so sorry, for I had to stay with her all the time, and I do hate staying with sick people so much. I am the poorest hand to nurse any one in the world."

"I suppose, or rather I hope you will stay at home here next summer."

"Oh, dear no! not if I can persuade pa to go. I would not stay here, in this still, dingy, old place, for anything, if I could help it."

Charley did not approve this feature in Miss Angelina's tastes so well. He knew that young ladies will naturally like to engage in amusements, and he had no reasonable objection to them in moderation; but he could not approve of that disposition of mind which finds pleasure in nothing but trifling gayeties, and especially contrary to his tastes was that propensity to squander, year after year, one's time and means in the very questionable pleasures and dissipation of watering-places.

"I see you have brought some new pieces of music," said he. "Will you not favor me with a song?"

"Well, I will sing for you the best I can, though I am not in tune this evening. I have not learned any of my new pieces yet. Now, what will you have, Mr. Anderson?" said she, seating herself at the piano.

"Sing for me the 'Banks and Braes o' Bonny Doon.' You know that, I suppose; do you not?"

"I used to know it; but I have utterly forgotten it."

"Play for me, then, 'The Harp that once through Tara's Halls.'"

"I haven't seen that piece yet; whom is it by? Wallace, is it not?"

"Well, then, 'The Last Rose of Summer,' or the 'Ingle Side,' or 'Ben Bolt.' I am very fond of old tunes."

"La me, Mr. Anderson, what a strange taste you have! Nobody sings those old songs now".

"Well, give me your favorite then."

Miss Angelina proceeded, thereupon, to "execute" "Robert le Diable" with immense pathos. Charles listened patiently, if not delightedly, though the lady had naturally a very fine voice, and was succeeding to her entire satisfaction, when an accident occurred which broke up the singing most effectually.

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It happened that, as Miss Angelina cast her eyes casually in the direction of the door, she saw—oh, horror!—a cat, a dreadful cat enter the room. Now, whether she thought that it became her, as a lady of refined sentiment and delicate, nervous temperament, to become at once immensely terrified, or whether she really did have an antipathy to the harmless little animal, we do not know; but, appropriating one of the screams of the song to her case, she jumped up from the piano, and besought Mr. Anderson, in the most pathetic terms, to protect her from the dreadful creature, and drive it out. Charley made at puss with great ardor, and in the chase she ran over the feet of Miss Angelina; this settled the matter. There was a sofa convenient; and so the lady fainted at once. The family were alarmed; and not until cold water and salts were abundantly applied did Miss Angelina revive, after which, when a decent period had elapsed, he took his leave.

"She is very beautiful," thought he, as he slowly wended his way home, "and she sings and plays very finely, and has some mind and sentiment; but I find something lacking about her. I don't think she would make a happy home. A man can't live on roses altogether, any more than he can on cabbages."

Days and months passed away; and still Charley was a bachelor, notwithstanding his resolution, and notwithstanding Miss Angelina looked very beautiful at him, and he took dinner several times at Mr. Prim's. He had too much intellect and poetry in his composition for the one, and too much philosophy and common sense for the other. Like a sensible man, he was using his reason and calm judgment in the matter.

One evening, as our hero was strolling in the outskirts of the village, his ear caught the sound of a favorite song, sung by one of the sweetest voices that he had ever heard; he paused and listened. The voice proceeded from a little white cottage, with an ivy-covered porch, and a little flower-garden in front. Charley knew it well as the residence of Mrs. Eaton, a widow lady in humble circumstances; but he could not imagine who it was that made such beautiful music, for he thought it the sweetest voice that he had ever heard. Long did he listen to the strains; and all the way home the sweet tones of the unknown songstress haunted his soul. When he returned home, he inquired of his mother who it was that was staying at the widow Eaton's.

"Why, Mary Eaton, her daughter, who has just returned from school, or rather from teaching school: for she has been teaching for a year. Don't you remember little Mary that used to pass here every day?"

"Oh, yes! I remember her very well now she had such pretty brown eyes."

"How came you to inquire about her?"

"Why, I was passing Mrs. Eaton's this evening, and I heard the sweetest voice singing that I ever listened to; and I could not imagine who it was. I think I must claim old acquaintance."

"I have no doubt, Charley, that you will find Miss Mary a very fine girl; and you must take care of your heart, for she is very pretty and accomplished. It is a great pity that she is poor."

According to his resolution, Charley, the next evening, called at Mrs. Eaton's; he was ushered into a plain, but neatly furnished little parlor, where he found Miss Mary. Mary Eaton had not regular features; but her hair was of a beautiful brown, and she had the prettiest brown eyes in the world. It was not long before Charley was on the very best terms with the little schoolmistress. They talked about old times and old friends, and Mary sang and played many sweet old songs just to suit Charley's taste; so he passed a delightful evening, and was half in love, though he did not know it when he started home.

Night after night found Charley at the widow Eatons. At first, he labored to find some excuse for his visits; but at last he was compelled to acknowledge to himself that his heart was gone—that he was dead in love. All his philosophy, all his cool reason, had vanished. He actually did not know, he had formed no idea whether Mary Eaton had a domestic turn or not, or whether she could make a comfortable home; he did know that she had a sweet voice, and that the light of her eye thrilled his soul with inexpressible emotion. It was with some misgivings that he broke the news of his intended proposal to his mother; as he expected, she objected and remonstrated. His grandmother thought Susan Prim a much better match; but old Mr. Anderson, who had been crossed in love in youth himself, and had not entirely forgotten that he was once a young man, as old men are so very apt to do, gave his opinion decidedly in favor of Charley having his own way.

In the mean time, it had never once occurred to the mind of Charley that perhaps he might meet with opposition to his matrimonial schemes from the young lady herself. It is true that, although he had not directly asked her the momentous question, he had had every kind of encouragement; and he did not doubt for a moment that he had made a favorable impres

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sion on Mary's heart, and that his suit would end according to his wishes. It was, therefore, with much surprise and mortification that he received a refusal.

"I will confess to you, Mr. Anderson," said Mary, "that I prefer you to any one in the world; but I cannot consent to marry you until you have proved yourself fully a man capable of acting an honorable and useful part in the great drama of life—a part worthy of your opportunities and talents. It may be an absurd thing in me; but I cannot love a man, Mr. Anderson, unless he shows the will and ability to distinguish himself from the masses by intellectual superiority. Perhaps I have read too much history or romance; but it is so. You have an ample field for the exercise of those talents which I know you possess. These are stirring times, and this is a progressive country; we have a great destiny to fulfil, and must all contribute our portion to the grand work. I can do but little myself; but I will exert what influence I can to animate others."

Charley attempted no reply; various and conflicting emotions made him dumb. To be reproached for inefficiency, for weakness, by any one, is bad enough; but when that reproach comes from one we love, it stings like a scorpion. Charley felt humiliated; he almost hated himself, and, between disappointed love, mortified pride, and self-reproach, he spent many sleepless hours that night.

From that time, Charles Anderson applied himself to study in earnest. Naturally gifted with eloquence and a fine genius, he soon distinguished himself as one of the leading men of the country and of the State. He was sent to represent his county in the legislature; and three years from the time when Mary Eaton rejected his suit he stood in the halls of Congress, one of the representatives of his State in the great council of the nation.

In the mean time, troubles had come on Mary and her mother. The little property which they had had been taken from them, owing to some defect in the title; and they now depended on the exertions of Mary alone for their support. Charley had not been to see her since the eventful night of his rejection; for he felt so humiliated that he could not have looked her in the face.

"I always thought you were wrong, Mary, in rejecting Mr. Anderson," said her mother one evening, as they were talking over their affairs; "you will never have such an offer again."

"I could not love him then, mother; and, if he cares nothing for me now that he has become a distinguished man, I cannot help it. It makes me happy though to think that I have had some influence upon his destiny."

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It is a beautiful evening; the sun is smiling good-night to the budding trees and opening flowers of spring. The door of the cottage is open, and Mary is singing a plaintive old song to her piano. A manly step is heard on the piazza; and when she turns to see who it is, Charley Anderson is standing in the door. We pass over the embarrassment of the first greeting; both were agitated. At length, after they had become acquainted again, Charley gathered courage to make a speech after this fashion: "I owe to you, Miss Mary, all that I have done worthy of myself and my circumstances, and I have come again to offer you my hand and my whole heart."

The rest of what was said and done on that occasion is not reported; but Charley Anderson carried with him to Washington a bride that he was not ashamed to compare with any in the nation, and even his grandmother said "that he had shown his sense in selecting for a wife a woman who could do something, and not one of those dressed-up dolls who seem to think that the great object of life is to show themselves."

The moral of our story was thus expressed by Charley himself to a young friend, shortly after his marriage, in a conversation on the subject of matrimony:—

"In the first place, Tom, it is idle for a man under fifty, who is really a full developed man in all respects, to imagine that he is proof against the shaft of Cupid. I tell you, my dear boy, a man may arm himself with as much philosophy and reason as he pleases, and it won't avail him; he must be an exception to the law of human nature, and greatly defective in some way in head or heart if he does not fall in love at some time or other. Secondly, it is not good sense to marry for personal beauty and graces alone, nor merely for domestic qualifications, but for both united; it takes both together, with a good heart, to make a perfect wife, one whom we can love with our entire being, one whom we can admire with our intellects, and adore with our whole heart, one for whom a man is willing to encounter all things, to suffer all things, to endure all hardships, to face any danger, to rise early and retire late, to labor, and, if necessary, to die. And, finally, never flatter yourself that you can marry any girl you choose if she happens not to be wealthy or moving in high life, or that all poor girls are willing to sell themselves to rich husbands; I tell you it is not so."

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THE CHAPEL CHORISTERS.
Neal, Alice D
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THE CHAPEL CHORISTERS.

BY ALICE B. NEAL.

"GLORIA in excelcis" rang through the little chapel in a clear volume of sound that rose above the accompaniment of the organ, and was just shaded and softened by the flute-like tenor that accompanied that single female voice.

Many of the sunbrowned seamen who worshipped there knew the voice and the singer, and listened the more earnestly, because of her, to the chants and psalms, and the sermon that followed. It was "English Bessie" who came among their wives and children on many a kindly errand, and had always a cheerful word for the sick and desponding. The men called her "a hearty lass," and wished many a "blessing on her honest face." Their wives, in Sunday dress, and proud of the stalwart arms in which they leaned, "thought it shame" that she had not chosen from among the rough and hardy wooers by which she was surrounded.

Prayer and chant were over, and the still sermon time came, when Bessie's duties were ended; and she drew the crimson curtain aside to look and listen with the rest. The warm summer sun came quivering from the water through the lance-shaped windows, and lighted up the pale, grave face of the clergyman in his pulpit and the strangely gathered audience.

Some were boatmen, or hands from coasting vessels, whose occupation allowed them leisure for home and its comforts. They were surrounded by their wives and little ones in all the smartness of their Sunday costume, relieved by scarfs or shawls of bright foreign weaving, the gift of some successful relative on a return voyage. The children sat uneasily on the high benches, and looked at the flies on the window, or studied the pictures in their prayer-books, as children will. These were the more regular attendants of the chapel. Beyond them, the trim blue jacket of a man-of-war's man was the contented neighbor of some "lubberly whaler," in ordinary intercourse a special aversion. And there were men whose dress had no pretension to Sunday neatness, who scarcely knew one day of the week from another, except that the seventh was, in some sort, a day of rest even with the hardest captains under whom they sailed, who were there they scarcely knew how or why, from idle whim or vague curiosity, to hear the music or "what the parson would have to say," gathered literally from the highways and by-ways, and compelled to come in.

There were unusual sights and sounds for church-goers without. Now loud oaths or snatches of a sailor song from some group strolling along the wharves, then a hiss of steam, a flitting past of streamers, as the Sunday pleasure-boats left on their crowded hourly trips down the bay. Bells rang and dogs barked, men shouted or laughed with coarse, unseemly merriment at coarser jests, the chapel rocked and swayed in the swell of some arriving or departing vessel, and a steady, glaring heat struck upon the small organ-loft, whose occupants were familiar with all this in the discharge of their self-appointed duty.

Heat and cold were alike to them so long as they could lead in the "common praise" and respond to the "common prayer" of those in whom they thus evinced untiring interest. English Bessie, for the sake of the father and brother, buried by one wave from the same wreck; and the blind man at her side, whose white hands drew such noble music from the organ's keys, while he sang the pure, clear tenor of which we spoke.

He sat with his face turned towards Bessie, as if his sightless eyes longed to know the features of this familiar friend, whom he had never yet seen. His long hair, thrown backwards from a forehead that had never known exposure, touched the broad linen collar, turned over a simple ribbon, tied carelessly about the throat. His dress was simple and far from new, but neat, so neat that you wondered to know a woman's hand had not arranged it. Music was at once his passion and his livelihood. For the rest, he had no relatives and no dependence.

It was a singular friendship that had grown up between these two, who met not elsewhere; and when the sermon was done, it was pleasant to see the sisterly care with which she handed him his hat and staff, and led him down the narrow stairs, where he must have groped slowly but for her hand.

"Here is the sill, Richard," she said, "and here the door; and there is the rector waiting to speak with you."

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But the quick ear of the blind man discovered another step, and, though he listened to the kindly words of the grave rector, he heard an invitation given and refused where Bessie stood at the door of the vestibule.

"What did he want?" asked Richard, in the quick, excited manner peculiar to him, as his hand was once more placed in that firm, reliant clasp, and she led him over the swaying plank to the shore.

"Steady! There, now you are on the wharf," Bessie said, as she might have soothed an excited child. "Who? What? Allen?"

"Yes, Allen. I heard his voice when Mr. Storey was talking. When did the 'Bess' come in? He has had a quick trip."

"Not very; the usual time. There, now, you do not need my hand any longer."

"Why do you take it away, Bessie? There is a crossing yet, and those piles of lumber."

"Yes"—and she laughed pleasantly—"but you know them as well as I do. You could lead me here."

"*I wish I could*," he answered below his breath, for the blindness was still a dark horror to him. "But Allen."

"He only asked about to-night, if I should go to chapel, and"—

"If he could walk with you. When are you going to be married?" he added, abruptly.

But Bessie only pointed out a loose round stone in the crossing, as if she did not hear the question.

"Mother's not so well to-day, and I cannot go as far as usual," she said, as they entered a narrow, crooked street. "How bright and pleasant it must look out at the asylum now, with all the roses in bloom!"

"Yes, if one could *see* them."

"Richard, you are not thankful to-night for what you *can* enjoy," said the young girl, earnestly. "You have a cheerful home and fresh, sweet-scented air and cheerful society."

"Go on, Bessie. You mean 'while you are shut up in this close street with a sick mother, and your bread to gain by your needle.' But then there is Allen!" and the gloomy tone came back again.

"Let him *be* there," Bessie answered, decidedly, pausing at her own door-stone. "Richard, you sang 'Benedic, anima mea' this afternoon; remember it on your way home. I shall so long as my mother has a shelter, and I have health and strength to work for her. Take care now, and look out for the carriages and the crossings. I shall have time for a practice hour on Wednesday evening. You may come to tea if you like."

The blind man's staff rang upon the pavement as he went on his lonely way, not knowing that she stood upon the door-stone, and watched for his safety so long as he was in sight. He did not know what should make him so restless and disturbed about this marriage. It was right and natural, and what he could have wished for Bessie. They would be finely paired, the high-spirited, energetic woman and her sailor lover. He so tall, and bronzed, and stalwart, as Bessie's husband ought to be, frank and generous, as sailors ever are.

Richard Langdon, the blind music-teacher, still lived in the asylum where he had studied his beautiful art, with the love and confidence of pupils and teachers. The rooms were of noble proportions, the grounds fragrant with sweet-scented shrubbery, and cool with the shadow of heavy foliage. Here, he walked that still Sabbath afternoon, and thought upon his aimless, joyless childhood, and what if he had had a sister like Bessie to cheer it. There were many hours when his mind preyed upon itself; it had always been so in the pauses of study, but never so much as now.

So, he wandered down the rose-walk, listening to the murmur of voices that rose from the play-ground beyond the garden, and envying the children their Sabbath rest and peace. But his mind would go back to Bessie and their first acquaintance, when she came to offer her fresh, strong, but untrained voice to assist him lead in the chapel music. His nature was so gentle that her quick, stirring way was not pleasant to him at first; it was not his idea of womanliness. He liked her better when he found how much in earnest she was to improve this one talent, and how grateful for his instructions. Now when they were together, he laid aside the timid uncertainty of step and manner, trusting to her guidance. When she was married, all these pleasant walks and rehearsals must end, for she would have new duties and companionship and pleasures. No wonder he was restless and disturbed.

The pale, gentle widow had a welcome for him when the appointed evening came; and he sat down near her, in the open door, until Bessie should come in. He could *feel* the neatness of all around him, and heard the cat purring in the door-sill and the kettle singing its pleasant evening song in the outer room. It was all so still and homelike to him, though he had never known a home but in his dreams; so different

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from the clatter of feet through the corridors of the asylum, the opening and shutting of doors, the hum of children conning their lessons, or the discordance of the tortured musical instruments under the hands of unskilful pupils. He wondered if the gay, boisterous sailor would appreciate this quiet rest, so dear to him, and Bessie's invalid mother, with her delicate tastes and instincts.

When tea was over and the household duties were ended for the day, though it was pleasant to hear Bessie go so easily about them, she came, for the first time, and sat down by him on the door-stone, for the house was one of those low, old-fashioned tenements where you step from the street into the dwelling-room at once. The street was still and deserted, save now and then a solitary footstep echoed along the pavement, and died away in the shadows beyond. A massive, but long-disused warehouse, built when this narrow street had its great commercial fame and influence, loomed opposite to them, the iron-bound doors and shutterless windows gleaming in the moonlight, an old, decayed, but to Bessie a pleasant neighbor. It was better to sit by her window and imagine the days of its ancient bustle and opulence than to watch the bad management of some thriftless housekeeper, or her neglected children quarrelling on the pavement. To-night, it was especially pleasant to see it so softly shadowed; and she described it to the blind man as she would have drawn the picture of a friend.

And yet she could not draw a portrait of herself that satisfied him. She always turned away with some jest upon her stout figure and heavy features, which displeased and annoyed him, for he never could make her anything but beautiful in his mind.

"I will ask her now," thought Richard, "before any one has a claim upon her;" and, with quick impulse, he preferred a long-indulged, but unspoken request.

"If you will only let me touch your hair—your face one instant, Bessie, as I do when I wish to know my friends and pupils better, I shall be more contented when you are Allen's wife. You have been such a dear, true friend to me!"

She took up both his hands, and, stooping, laid them on her bowed head.

"As I thought," he murmured rather than spoke; and his hands shook and trembled, though she was so quiet beneath their touch. "Soft, wavy hair; it is brown, I know, brown and silken as a child's. The broad, open forehead, that belongs to you, Bessie. I know how your eyes look now, honest and fearless and very truthful; such long lashes, and your cheek so round and smooth! How could you tell me that you were not beautiful!"

"Because I am not," she said, taking his hands again. "And feel how hardened my hands are, while yours are soft and white. It is an ugly contrast, and so are our faces and characters and dispositions," she added presently.

"I knew—but Allen is manly and hardy and cheerful. I was not always so gloomy, Bessie; truly, I was not. But I grew so restless and dependent and *homesick*—I cannot describe it any other way—yet I never have had, and never shall have a home such as other men win for themselves, who do not know how to prize it as I should."

"It is almost time for the rehearsal," said Bessie, as if to lead him from this hopeless mood, "and mother has fallen asleep there upon her pillows. Come, let us go, Richard."

She drew his arm within hers as they rose, and they walked on towards the river, for the chapel was scarcely a stone's throw. He longed to say more, to tell her all that the touch of that bowed head had revealed to him, how passionately he loved her, how doubly hateful his blindness and dependence were to him for her sake, how doubly solitary his life would always be for having known her and for her care over him; but he struggled with this stormy mood bravely, for he knew he had no right to lay the burthen of his misfortunes at any woman's feet, even if she were free to take it up and bear it onward for him.

So, they walked on in silence for a little time until they began to hear the soft plash of the incoming tide against the wharves and the sides of the vessels lying at anchor. It recalled the trim schooner "Bess" and her captain to his mind.

"When are you to be married?" he asked, abruptly. "Soon, I hope."

"Do you, Richard?"

"Yes, it is better to be soon;" and again the strong tide of feeling rushed to his lips. He pressed his teeth into them, so that he should say no more.

"Well, then," said Bessie, her voice trembling a little—he had never known this before—"I am going to make you a strange proposal, not strange, for it is right and best; mother thinks as I do. You are to be my husband, Richard, when I do marry, for you love me as Allen does not and cannot, and you need me more than he, as I told him when he asked me to be his wife."

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"I, Bessie! Poor and blind! I *your* husband!"

He reeled as if a sudden blow had been struck, but she upheld him steadily.

"If you do not wish it, Richard, it ends here. You know me well enough in these three years to know that I mean all I say, and that I had only to assure myself of your love before I allowed mine to be seen. You would never have asked this of me; but *here I am*. I offer myself, my love, and care, and companionship to you, if you will take it. Richard, let me be home, and strength, and *sight* to you always."

It was well that they had reached the chapel, for the courage with which she had nerved herself was fast forsaking her. By the dim light, she saw their rector bending over his books in the vestry, as was his wont when he expected them there. The blind man heard the advancing step and kindly welcome, as he came forward to the chancel, and the sound of other voices in the loft above them.

"Make it real; it is all a dream," he said; and they knelt down together for their pastor's blessing, for he knew all that was in their hearts, and that henceforth the chant of thanksgiving would come from the innermost depths of Richard Langdon's soul—

"Who crowneth me with mercy and loving kindness."

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NOW AND THEN.

(Concluded from page 424.)

CHAPTER III.

SCENE.—*A lawyer's office. A table covered with books, papers in red tape, &c. Mr. Frank Hartley, in gown and slippers, reading the morning's paper.*

TWENTY years have passed away, reader, since we saw Mr. Frank Hartley promenading in the conservatory amid flowers, and by starlight. The stars shine on the same; but everything sublunary has changed. The lights of the ball-room are out; the flowers have faded; the gay crowd are scattered and gone forever. There was Mrs. Binkham; two other Mrs. Binkhams have administered the hospitality of her house since that day, and there is a prospect of a third, for Binkham is once more a widower. There is Mr. Frolic, who was the life of all parties, and would dance and drink champagne until three o'clock in the morning; Frolic has been a clergyman and a missionary these many years. Miss Digby—it is positively true—Miss Digby is a grandmother; and as for the little fairy whose appearance in the conservatory had so suddenly altered Master Frank's determination —ah, she has been sleeping these many long years under yon white stone in the quiet churchyard.

Mr. Hartley has forgotten them all. Since we last saw him, his aunt and uncle are dead. He has inherited both the fortune and the business of the latter, and made no mean addition to them; but he has escaped the hand of time no more than others. He wears large whiskers now, carefully trained to the corners of the mouth to conceal two deep lines, to which bachelors are by no means partial. His hair waves as luxuriantly about his temples as it was used to do; but just on top it must be confessed that it is very thin. He has grown stouter, and looks a little careworn, and, besides, has come to be somewhat stately in manner, and of quite an imposing presence.

This very morning finds him in the full tide of business. The famous Doe *vs.* Roe has been before the supreme court all the week; and he is senior counsel for the much persecuted defendant. He is to speak to-day; and expectation is on tiptoe, as he well knows. He has been hard at work on his brief for several days; and it is not now quite finished. He has just laid aside his pen to glance at the daily paper, that "brief, abstract, and chronicle of the time" that finds its way to the breakfast-table and counting-house of all.

The eye of Mr. Hartley glanced over reports of debates in Congress, and cases in courts, prices of stocks, deaths and marriages, news from California, and news from Europe, arrival of the Great World, three days later from Europe, change of ministry in England, conspiracy in France, rise of bread-stuffs, advances in cotton, deaths of distinguished persons: Dowager Duchess of Surrey, General Sir Edward Bourke, Count Poskiewicoski, Hon. Charles Euston, formerly ambassador to Austria from the United States. Mr. Hartley paused, and read the paragraph again; there it was, the death of Charles Euston, "at Naples, November 23d."

The paper slipped from the hand of the lawyer, who, contemplating very fixedly the glowing coals in the grate, fell into a brown study. We shall not attempt to get at the thoughts which passed through his mind, but shall only record that the clock over the mantle ticked away in its usual manner, and finally struck the half hour, when Mr. Hartley started up, drew his chair to the table, and commenced to work on his brief in good earnest.

So interested was he that he did not hear a rap on the door until it was repeated; he opened it, and his colleagues in the case of —— entered, armed with books and papers. Then there was a hasty consultation, during which Mr. Dry said little, and Mr. Flowery a great deal; then the aforesaid clock, ticking away over the mantle, struck ten. Mr. Dry compared it with his repeater, and pronounced it correct. Books and papers are hurriedly thrust into green bags, Mr. Dry making some attempts to arrange them systematically, and Mr. Flowery effectually thwarting him; then the party sally into the street, and bustle into the court-room just in time to hear their case called.

CHAPTER IV.

THE trial is over, not that the judge has yet given his decision; but every one knows what

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that decision will be. Frank Hartley has excelled himself; he has placed the cap-stone on his before high reputation. When he rose to speak, the case trembled in the balance; when he sat down, no one doubted that his client had carried the day. He had been listened to with profound attention by the court and the oldest and ablest members of the bar, who sat around him. Half a dozen times, the crowd that filled the room to the ceiling burst into involuntary applause, which could be repressed only with difficulty. Hartley had reached the height of a lawyer's ambition; the prize longed for and toiled for during twenty years was his. Was it worth the labor it had cost?

Mr. Hartley did not ask himself this question when, once more reinstated in dressing-gown and slippers, he paced his solitary rooms. He thought he *ought* to be happy, and so concluded he was, and in this belief lighted his candle and went to bed, but not to sleep. The excitement of the last few days served to keep him long awake, and thoughts and fancies came trooping through his brain in what seemed an endless succession; and when, at length, he slept, his slumbers were quite uneasy. His mind was busy with the events of the day. Again he was in the crowded court-room before the grave judges, and surrounded by his professional brethren; then he was speaking with the greatest fluency, and much to his satisfaction. He wondered not a little at his own eloquence; for so much of it was entirely new to him that it seemed as if quite another person had said it, and not himself. After a time, however, his ideas became confused, and then quite indistinct. He strove to proceed, but a power very superior to his will hindered him, and during this struggle the very court-room seemed to grow indistinct; there was no doubt about it. The judges on the bench, the bar, the crowd outside of the railings, were all fading into a mist, while the venerable presiding judge, on whom Hartley's eyes were now riveted, underwent a still more wonderful transfiguration. His stern, wrinkled features softened; his cold, gray eye grew dark, and beamed with light and love; thick, raven tresses replaced, with their glossy wave, the thin, white hairs of his head. In another moment, all thought of the judge was gone; in his place was a beautiful girl of eighteen, one that Frank Hartley remembered—oh, so well! The next moment, she was by his side. The moonlight broke through the mist into which the court-room had faded, and was again sleeping on a familiar summer landscape, and pouring a flood of light over the old house, and stealing down among the leaves and branches of the trees.

Frank was not much surprised at all this; people are not surprised at very wonderful things in dreams. What was more natural than for him to be under the favorite oak, with Emily at his side, her fair face and graceful figure softened into unearthly beauty in the shadowy moonlight? What more natural, too, than that, with a heart full of tenderness for this loving, trusting girl, he should seek to clasp her to his heart, and ask her to share his lot in life? a lot which he now well knew could not be happy without her. He made the effort to do this, but in vain. He strove to speak; but not a word could he utter. He struggled in vain to move a finger, for a power like fate riveted him motionless to the spot where he stood; and even while he strove, the vision faded, his own efforts relaxed, and, unconscious of himself and all else, Hartley sank into a profound slumber. He smiled at the dream the next morning as he sat at breakfast over his egg and toast, and then straightway forgot it.

* * * * *

Two busy years have passed away with our lawyer since his dream; and our scene is once more laid in a ball-room. The lights are blazing on a party of whom more than one-half were in the cradle when Mrs. Binkham gave her first party, more than twenty years ago. Then, a soft effulgence was poured from a thousand wax candles over the ball-room, an effulgence very delusive, but certainly very becoming. Rouge and powder, freckles and sharp angles, false hair and false teeth, all pass muster remarkably well by candlelight; beauty grows more attractive, and ugliness loses its deformity. True, wax candles have their drawbacks. The melted wax will sometimes soil the walls and carpets, or the laces and satins of the ladies, or meander down the coats of the gentlemen; but, notwithstanding these drawbacks, give us wax candles before the ghastly glare of gaslight.

But people laugh and talk, dance and flirt, eat and drink, by gaslight as well as by candlelight. Mrs. Anton's was not a whit less gay than Mrs. Binkham's party. There was the same crowd of noisy young gentlemen, around the punch-bowl, in a small room off the hall, and becoming noisier every instant. Stout gentlemen with red faces and capacious waistcoats wondered when supper would be served. Young ladies, heated with the dance, sipped ice-cream and lemonade in the refreshment-room, or, peeping into the glasses, vehemently declared that they looked like frights. Old ladies in

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dress caps and false fronts sat on the sofas arranged around the walls, and criticized their friends, or told wonderful stories of the precocious master Billy, at home fast—fast asleep in his crib, or the delicate Hannah Maria, that stout young lady with a very red face, and very hot just now from excessive dancing.

A group of "talking men" are assembled in a corner of one of the rooms near to a folding-door. Mr. Hartley was the centre of it, and, as was his custom when a little excited in conversation, was the principal speaker. As he became more animated, the circle increased, until quite a crowd collected around him.

Mr. Hartley (Hortatory). "The period is yet distant when Europe will be settled in the possession of rational liberty, and that, because her people know not that liberty is consistent with restraint; nay, inseparable from it. It is our happiness, as a people, to know this great truth. We are taught from the cradle that the constitution and laws are the surest guarantee of liberty, and all our subsequent experience confirms it. With us, liberty and law."

Mrs. Anton approached Mr. Hartley, through the crowd of gentlemen who make way for her. "Law, Mr. Hartley; how can you, you naughty man! You are talking about law; do leave it to those odious courts, and to offices filled with dusty books and papers. I cannot permit you to have all the gentlemen present to yourself. There is Mrs. Simpkins, who has been sighing for Mr. Jones this half hour; Mr. Thompson, you have not danced to-night, I am sure. See, they are just forming a quadrille, and Miss Lovey wants a partner. Mr. Ayer, Miss Belle is sinking under the weight of her bouquet; can you not relieve her of it? No one holds a bouquet more gracefully than you, Mr. Ayer. Come, Mr. Hartley, I wish to introduce to you a lady, a widow—a most charming person."

Mr. Hartley mutters some commonplace about widows; but is quite unheeded by Mrs. Anton, who leads him off triumphantly.

During this colloquy, there is a lady seated somewhat apart from the rest of the company, in a recess formed by a bay window. She is dressed very simply, and without a single ornament in her glossy black hair. As she sits partially in the shadow of the curtain festooned above her, and quietly, perhaps half sadly, contemplates the festive scene, she seems rather a spectator of than a participator in it. It was to this lady that Mrs. Anton directed her steps, leading along the half reluctant Mr. Hartley. Mr. Hartley could not distinctly see her features in the position in which she was placed, but there was something in her figure and the turn of her neck and head, that made his heart beat more quickly than was its wont of later years.

"Mrs. Euston, permit me to present Mr. Hartley," said Mrs. Anton.

The lady addressed turned, and her eyes met those of Mr. Hartley. The recognition was mutual.

"Emily," "Frank—Mr. Hartley," was the simultaneous exclamation, and Frank and Emily were once more together after so many long years of separation.

I know not how it is, but these much desired meetings are apt to embarrass, and to end in something like disappointment. In the present instance, there could be no lack of subject-matter for conversation, yet the pauses were long and numerous and very awkward. Even Emily seemed at a loss for something to say. All that Mr. Hartley learned was that she was but a few days arrived from Europe, and was on her way to Hampton, where she intended henceforth to reside. She was spending, she said, a few days with Mrs. Ridley—Ellen Trowbridge that was—the same who had once paid her a visit at Hampton when they were girls. Mr. Hartley must remember Ellen. "I shall be very glad to see you at Mrs. Ridley's," added she, "and so, I am sure, will Mrs. Ridley. You will see Ella, too."

"Ella, who is Ella?" asked Mr. Hartley.

"My daughter," replied Mrs. Euston, slightly blushing; "you did not know then that I have a daughter?"

Mr. Hartley certainly did not, and his face said so very plainly; for he felt, and really looked as much astounded as he would have done if the decision in the great Doe and Roe case had been adverse to his client. Mrs. Euston followed up her blush with a smile, half merry, half sad. Her woman's penetration easily enabled her to perceive what was passing in the mind of Frank; she was amused at his embarrassment, while some associations, bordering on the mournful, were recalled to her memory.

Mr. Hartley, after this, made some further attempts to sustain conversation, but they signally failed; and, at the first opportunity, he took his leave, and walked home, vexed with himself, indeed, quite deserted by his self-complacency, of which it must be confessed he had a very fair share.

As for Emily, we shall not pry into her thoughts and feelings on this occasion. The secrets of a woman are sacred; besides, it is not

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always an easy matter to read the fair dissemblers; and Emily had her full share of self-control. It is enough to say that, while Mr. Hartley walked home with very evident chagrin, Mrs. Euston was in excellent spirits during the remainder of the evening, and was pronounced brilliant by quite a crowd of admirers who came to surround her, who vied for the honor of escorting her to the supper-room, and bowed her out when starting-time arrived.

Mr. Hartley's chagrin, whatever was the cause of it, did not prevent him from presenting himself the next day at Mrs. Ridley's, punctually as the clock struck one. He ascended the flight of marble steps that led to the hall-door, pulled at the silver bell handle, and was ushered into the drawing-room. Emily, dressed in the simplest of morning gowns, met him with all the frankness of an old friend. She presented to him a black-eyed girl of fifteen, with a sweet, pensive little face, who was Ella. Mr. Hartley loved Ella at once, and showed it very plainly. He sat down; the ice that more than twenty years of absence had formed was broken; and the happiest hour that Frank had spent since leaving Hampton glided rapidly away.

Emily explained to Frank that she had remained abroad after the death of her husband, for the purpose of perfecting her daughter in the languages. She was now at home for good; "forever," as she said. "And you, Mr. Hartley," continued she, "I hear that you have been successful, that you are distinguished; your name reached us abroad."

Frank acknowledged that he had been fortunate.

"I always knew you would succeed," said Emily; "I always had confidence in you."

"I think you always had more faith in me than I merited," said Frank.

"Not so, for have I ever been disappointed in you? I remember, when quite a little child, attempting to cross on a decayed plank the little stream at the foot of our garden. I would not have tried, had you not been there. I knew if the plank broke you would not let me drown; and you did not. The plank broke, and you brought me, wet and crying, safely out of the water. You have not forgotten that? Did I ever fall from Yet, when you were with me? Poor old Yet, he died in Louisiana, before we went abroad. His southern home did not suit him, and Nero died there too; poor Nero, you remember him, and the ravages he once committed in my tulip beds."

And so they talked of the past with delight, smiling, and yet half mournful, as we all talk and think of the happy days of childhood and youth, when they have far gone from us.

The reader, I am sure, after the above, will not be surprised to learn that Mr. Hartley was daily at Mrs. Ridley's, during Mrs. Euston's sta· in town; or that he promptly accepted a very cordial invitation to visit her in the country the ensuing summer; that he felt, for the first time for many years, impatient of the business that doomed him to the city until the courts should take their summer recess.

CHAPTER V.

TIME, that goes steadily on without regard to the happiness or woe of mortals, at length brought the sultry month of July near to its close, and with it the end of term time, and a brief holiday to lawyers that are really oppressed with business, and lawyers who only pretend to be busy.

Of all the legal tribe, none left behind the glare and bustle of the town with a lighter heart than Frank Hartley. With what satisfaction he found himself once more at old Hampton—suddenly grown very dear—dearer by far than in the days of yore. He thought that the sky was of a purer blue, that the fields and woods spread of a fairer green, and that the waters rippled more brightly in the sun at Hampton than anywhere beside. How the external world varies with the light in which it is viewed! The inward light of a happy spirit has beautified scenes less recommended by natural advantages than the very pretty country around Hampton.

In the present instance, perhaps, the sky, and earth and water took some of their tints from that fair woman in whose presence Mr. Hartley generally viewed them now; for Frank and Emily have resumed their custom of walking and riding together, as if nothing had intervened to interrupt the habit for a single day. Again the piano is open in the long-deserted drawing-room, and the harp restrung, and Emily Euston plays and sings, in her admirable manner, some of the finest compositions in the world; and some, too, that are the sweetest, from being old favorites, sung in past times. Beside, Mr. Hartley bends enraptured over the instrument, just as he used to do; but he sings no longer, will not take part in the duets that he used to execute with so much vigor, and has quite lost the art of playing the guitar.

But Mr. Hartley's knowledge of books and men was much more extended than formerly,

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though his musical talents had lain uncultivated. He had read much, thought much; and had been a not inattentive observer of men and things, in the living world around him. Many pleasant evenings he spent at Hampton, reading with Mrs. Euston their favorite authors, talking criticism, and comparing their views and experiences on a thousand subjects. No wonder, in the midst of such delightful occupations, the days flew by rapidly, and the two weeks which Mr. Hartley had determined on spending at Hampton became six.

But every mail from the north now brought packages of business letters, forwarded by the office clerk; the vacation was over, and Mr. Hartley felt it was high time to bid farewell to the country.

"How provoking," exclaimed he, as he came in from the free and pleasant sunshine, and found one of these packages awaiting him on the table.

He had just returned from a ride on horseback with Mrs. Euston, who never was more charming than on that very morning. Her riding-dress showed her full and graceful figure to much advantage, while her face was flushed with the exercise, and filled with animation. Perhaps it was the contrast between this ride, and that dull-looking-package, that suggested the exclamation.

However this might be, the contents of these letters were such that Mr. Hartley could no longer postpone his return to town. He determined to go, and that on the very next morning, and made his preparations for it.

Somehow, on this his last night at Hampton, Frank and Emily once more found themselves under the solitary oak-tree we have before mentioned. The moon was shining just as brightly as when, more than twenty years ago, they stood on the same spot. Softly the beams came down through the silvered air, on the old mansion, on the gentle flowers, over the trees, and lawn; and the same weird figures rested on the grass from the shadowing leaves. The same pale beams fell too on Emily, and in their softening light, she seemed to Frank the same Emily in everything, the girl of other days; and the next moment he was at her feet. For a pleader so distinguished, it must be confessed he was not very eloquent. His words were few and a little broken, and his voice was tremulous. But after all, it did not matter, for the effect of them was everything that could be desired. Emily's hand was clasped in his; her head rested on his shoulder, while her tears fell fast—sweet tears, for they were of happiness and hope; and when Frank told her that he had always loved her better than tongue can tell, but for long, long years was not conscious of it himself, the happy smile that broke through and dispersed them was brighter than the rainbow that beams on the bosom of the departing shower.

Mr. Hartley went to Philadelphia the next morning, as he intended; but no one will be surprised to learn that he soon made another visit to Hampton, nor will they at all participate in the wonder which seized on the fashionable world at large, when the cards of Mr. Hartley and Mrs. Euston went round in the same delicate envelope, and the newspapers duly announced, under the head of *Married*, "Francis Hartley, Esq., to Mrs. Emily Euston."

We may be sure that many of Mr. Hartley's lady-acquaintances, both of an old and recent date, expressed themselves in a very amiable manner on this occasion. His friends, too, of the bar did not fail of their witticisms on their recusant companion. But Frank heard little of either of these, and was too much a man of the world to care for what he did hear. He is perfectly satisfied with his share in the transaction, with the possession of the greatest earthly bliss that heart can covet, and at Hampton he and Emily live in the enjoyment of all the happiness of the time *now* present, heightened by the recollection of what *then* was.

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THE RATIONAL MAN.: TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH, BY ANNE T. WILBUR. I.
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Nov 1855; 51, American Periodicals
pg. 432

THE RATIONAL MAN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH, BY ANNE T. WILBUR.

I.

Whoever pursues the route leading from Pithiviers to Orleans, must have been struck with the rural landscape which announces the approach to Neuville-aux-Bois. The forest, which extends on each side of the road, opens at each instant to reveal long vistas, in which the eye loses itself in the horizon, or broad clearings, covered with orchards and ripe grain. Here and there, on gently sloping hills, rise elegant country-houses, with gilded railings and half-closed blinds, which seem to float amid this ocean of verdure like flower-boats* on the great rivers of China.

One of these especially, built at the right of the road, was conspicuous for the extent of its out-houses, and its air of almost baronial grandeur. It was less a villa than a modern castle, having, instead of moats, a fish-pond; for towers, aviaries, and for a court of arms, an orchard adjoining a meadow. Elegance seemed there to be combined with comfort; and one would have thought this a Parisian hotel, surrounded by an English farm. The Noisetière was, in fact, not only the most commodious and splendid residence of the department, but the lands belonging to it were worth to its proprietor, M. Germain Fresneau, an annual revenue of about twelve thousand francs, which recent improvements had increased.

The son of an advocate of Orleans, who had died poor and unknown, M. Fresneau was indebted to his own industry for the large fortune he enjoyed. Everything had succeeded with him. His was a calculating mind, a stranger, as he himself said, to great sentiments, which always impede business; a moderate enemy of vices, from which he did not suffer, and an indifferent friend to virtues, by which he could not profit, accepting success, rejecting failure, seeking in everything positive interest, and taking the world as it is—in a word, what the vulgar call a rational man.

M. Germain Fresneau lived all the year round at the Noisetière with an old cousin, who, after having made and lost three fortunes, had come hither to spend the remnant of his life. Maurice had travelled over half the world, and studied men of all nations without arriving at anything but his own ruin; so he was a kind of jesting philosopher, who consoled himself for his want of success in witnessing the success of others,

* The flower-boats of China are floating *casinos*, ornamented with rare plants, and used for places of amusement.

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and sometimes quarrelled with Providence for the success of his cousin. The latter endured his freaks in consideration of his title of relative, and for his knowledge of agriculture, by which he profited. Maurice kept house at the Noisetière when M. Fresneau or his son George was obliged to go to the city on business; for the former merchant had not given up business, and his house had the reputation of being the safest and wealthiest in Orleans.

Three new guests had been at the chateau for several days past; one was the son-in-law of the proprietor, M. Durvest, of Nantes; the two others, Henri Fresneau and Emma, his daughter. Henri is the eldest brother of Germain; but science and the affections have absorbed his entire life. While the merchant has been enriching himself by speculations, his years have been spent in useful researches and domestic devotion. As poor to-day as when he left the house of his father, he had lost none of his serenity. The place of professor in the college of Orleans, which had just been granted him, sufficed to provide for his daily wants; and his daughter is happy! What can he desire more?

At the moment our story commences, breakfast is just over. Old Cousin Maurice and M. Durvest are still at table, smoking cigarettes from Maryland; Henri Fresneau, standing near a window, is reading the newspaper, and his brother is pacing the saloon with an air of ill-humor. The son-in-law, Durvest, has nothing remarkable about him; he is a man of about forty years, who is constantly in motion, speaks loud, and has an air of frankness. As for Cousin Maurice, his sharp profile and mocking smile would be repulsive if his glance had not a frank charm which reassured one; but it is especially the aspect of the two brothers which merits particular attention, and whose contrast strikes one at the first glance.

Henri is tall, stooping, and a little pale; his hair, already white, falls in waves to his shoulders, and the serene expression of his features is, as it were, crossed with a light cloud of sadness. The countenance of Germain, on the contrary, breathes assurance and prosperity; all his gestures have the confidence which reveal the successful man. He is wrapped in a full dressing-gown, lifts every moment his gold spectacles, as if to have them noticed, and walks with his hands behind him; but we will pause, for here our prologue ends. We have, like the ancient dramatists, described the place of the scene given, the names of the personages, and their characters; it is time now that the curtain shall rise, and that we should allow them to speak and act freely, according to their natures.

II.

Germain Fresneau had already made the tour of the saloon a dozen times; at last he stopped short suddenly before the window.

"Upon my soul, it is infatuation, Henri!" exclaimed he.

The latter raised his head.

"It is prudence, my brother," replied he, gently. "The marriage which you propose for Emma would render her miserable."

"Miserable!" repeated the merchant. "You do not seem to have understood that the young man in question possesses every desirable quality. I do not speak to you of his fortune, which you would undoubtedly regard as a defect."

"It is one for us, Germain," said the professor, smiling. "Wealth gives tastes and inclinations with which ours would perhaps poorly accord. The safest way is to live in the sphere for which one has been educated, and changes of position rarely profit the heart; nevertheless, this is not the reason of my refusal. I have told you, brother, my word is pledged; Emma is betrothed."

"That is to say that you refuse one of the richest proprietors in order to give her to some petty clerk, with whom she will die of hunger," observed Germain.

"Say that they will live in mediocrity, my brother; but happiness depends upon affection and character rather than upon opulence."

"Oh, I know your philosophical contempt for fortune!"

"You are mistaken in that. I do not despise fortune, for it is on earth an element of enjoyment, and, though it has been said of it that it is, like gunpowder, useful only when judiciously employed, I have more than once desired it; but it would be a bad bargain to sacrifice for it one's feelings."

"Hear me," said the merchant, pausing before Henri. "Allow me to speak to Emma. I will explain to her the advantages which this marriage presents; and perhaps she will herself consent to break with her clerk."

"No!" said the professor, hastily.

"What inconvenience do you see in this?"

"It would be an attempt beneath us, brother. Emma would resist your solicitations, I am sure; but we must not tempt hearts resolute in duty. She loves the young man, and has pledged her

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self to him; if your words should awaken in her soul the most transient temptation, it would be a disgrace to herself, and a sorrow for me. Leave those who are young to believe in virtue; this belief is their surest safeguard."

"Very well," said Germain. "You are afraid your daughter will be wiser than yourself; but let us see, Henri, let us reason, if possible, and try to understand each other."

The old cousin, who had until then listened to the debate in silence, threw away the stump of his cigarette, and laughed loudly.

"Understand each other!" exclaimed he. "One might as well talk of an understanding between the Pope and the Grand Lama. Your brother resembles you no more, Germain, than a star resembles a gas-burner."

"A gas-burner is worth twenty-five centimes an evening; and a star is good for nothing but sonnets," objected Durvest, with a laugh.

"As you say, nephew," resumed Maurice; "but you will never hinder the one from burning gratis, and the other for money. Germain was born to keep accounts and transact business; Henri to learn fine things, and exchange tenderness with other men, so I defy them to come to an understanding."

"All in good time," interrupted the merchant. "I understand nothing myself of your figures of rhetoric; but let us look a little at the result. Henri married a woman who had nothing, and whose nurse he has been during twenty years. He has lost the little he had amassed in paying the debts of some friend."

"Is it possible, uncle?" exclaimed Durvest.

"It is true, my friend," replied the professor.

"Nothing has succeeded with him; in fine," continued the merchant, "while I have gained the finest fortune in Loiret, as the register testifies, not to speak of having set up my son in business."

"And married your daughter well," murmured Durvest.

"In fact," continued Germain, "I have only common sense myself. I look upon this world simply as a nest in which we are to lodge ourselves as commodiously as possible. That makes you smile, brother," added he, seeing Henri shake his head; "but I should like to know what would become of the world with your sentiments and your reveries."

"A nest where one would not be contented with being warm, brother," replied the professor, "but in which one would also love and sing."

"All this is poetry!" exclaimed the merchant.

"The true style of romance!" murmured Durvest.

"They do not understand you, Henri," said Maurice; "you are speaking French to the Hebrews."

"It is with such ideas that you have spoiled your life," resumed Germain, "and will spoil that of your daughter. I, you see, have above all attempted to show my children the right side of things. I have not talked to them as you talk to Emma, of sympathies, of devotion, of self-denial; I have taught them to think of positive interests, because no person will think for them."

"May it please Heaven that you never have cause for repentance, my brother!" said Henri, gravely; "but be silent, I pray you, for here comes Emma to say that it is time to go."

The young girl just then entered, accompanied by her Cousin George, with a bouquet of flowers in her hand. She announced to her father that the cabriolet was ready for them.

"So, you will not remain a few days longer?" asked Maurice of the professor.

"I cannot, cousin," replied the latter. "My lectures must be resumed to-morrow; and I must be punctual. Adieu, Germain, I wish you continued prosperity. *Vale et me ama!*"

The two brothers embraced.

"Why do you not escort your uncle and cousin?" asked Maurice of George.

"I am waiting for the postman," said the young man.

"You will find your letters on your return."

"I may have to reply to them immediately."

"You think more of this than seeing us an hour longer?" asked Emma, smiling.

"Excuse me," said George; "but affection must yield to duty."

"And duty is business correspondence," added Maurice. "Let us go, then, my children; I will escort you myself."

The professor again pressed the hand of his brother, and departed, accompanied by his daughter and the old cousin. Germain looked after them for some time; then, turning towards George, who was conversing with Durvest, said, burying his hands in the pockets of his dressing-gown—

"Decidedly, your uncle is mad to refuse such a proposal for Emma."

"Perhaps he would have accepted it but for her promise to the young clerk."

"And what signifies such an engagement? Has there been any contract signed? Do you think the young man will like them any better for the sacrifice? All this, my children, is poetry, you see; a good opportunity lost may never be regained. Our business in this world is not

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to be heroes of romances, but to manage our affairs well."

"My uncle has always sacrificed to his ideas and sentiments," observed George.

"And he has been in the wrong, boy; one never prospers in abandoning one's interests. Every one for himself, and to each man his due, is the only just, rational, and moral law; for it is the only one of which no person has a right to complain."

"You talk like a lawyer, father-in-law," said Durvest, laughingly; "and I am happy to see that you have such ideas."

"I have never had any others."

"Then we shall understand each other, for I have come to speak to you on business."

"Let us pass into my study; we can converse there while waiting for the postman."

III.

Henri Fresneau and his daughter were on the road to Orleans. The latter, who had hastened his departure, was urging on the horse, which she constantly accused of slowness, and seemed to be earnestly seeking the city with her eyes; the professor observed her for some time with a smile.

"You are very impatient, Emma," said he, at last.

Emma blushed.

"I will engage you are hoping to find at home a letter from Oscar."

"Ah, you guess everything, father," said the young girl, confused.

Fresneau passed his hand over her hair.

"Poor children!" murmured he. "Why can I not unite you immediately? But it was your wish, Emma. By espousing Oscar, you might have accompanied him; you preferred to wait until he should be settled near us."

"That I might not leave you, father. Ah, is not my place at your side? Do you not need my cares and my affection?"

"Oscar also needs them."

"When we are young, we can postpone our happiness. Will not a whole life remain for its enjoyment? Then, at the first opportunity, Oscar will be sent to Orleans (his employers have promised it); and then we shall be reunited. We will buy in the suburbs a house, with a garden; we will give you the pleasantest room. You know how ingenious Oscar is; he will arrange places for your minerals and your herbarium; he has told me so."

"Indeed!" said Fresneau, playing with his daughter's curls, and caressing her.

"And that is not all!" said Emma, in a tone of childish importance. "We will furnish your chamber entirely new, father."

"How!"

"Yes, you shall have an arm-chair *à la Voltaire*, such as you have long desired, a lounge for your naps, and a place for your papers. I have calculated all; we shall be rich enough for that."

"But you children?"

"We, my father, will take our old furniture, you know how I love it, and Oscar also. Provided we have white curtains at our windows, and flowers on our mantelpiece, our room will always look pretty. Then we must be economical, father; six hundred francs of income will not go very far."

"No," said Fresneau, taking his daughter's hand, and pressing it in his own; "but this income is yours, Emma."

"Ours!"

"Yours, yours only, for it was your mother's. When a daughter is married, one must render her an account of the fortune held in trust; and I wish you to have all that belongs to you."

"What do you say?" exclaimed Emma, troubled. "Will you not then live with us?"

"Why not?"

"Then what mean you by rendering account? Do you think arithmetic divides better than affection? We wish to be your children, father, not your partners. Oh, do not talk, I entreat you, of what belongs to you or to me! Oscar would be hurt; and I am grieved by it."

"Be it so," said Fresneau, softened; "you are right. Of what use are several purses where there is but one heart? Where the affections rule, interests are effaced, or rather united. Let us continue to live as we have lived, without troubling ourselves as to what is given or received."

At these words, he embraced his daughter, and took the reins; they had just reached the suburbs of Orleans.

IV.

While Henri Fresneau was conversing thus with Emma, an explanation of quite another kind was taking place between the merchant and his son-in-law. As soon as they were alone, the latter announced to his father-in-law that he was about to extend his business, and was treating for the establishment of a house in India. He dwelt a long time on the advantages promised by the enterprise, and had no difficulty in proving that no other could compare with it.

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"Pardieu! It will be a gold mine to you!" exclaimed Germain Fresneau, who had listened very attentively; "and I wish I had a hundred thousand crowns to invest in it. Unfortunately, all my capital is at present engaged in that foolish speculation of the wines of the Loire."

"I could have twenty associates," replied Durvest; "but, as the business is certain, I prefer to transact it alone."

"And shall you have funds enough?"

"I may want some in addition to what I have; and that is the occasion of my coming."

"You know I can dispose of nothing," objected the merchant.

"Be composed, father-in-law," said Durvest, laughing. "I do not want the ready; but I have a proposition to make to you."

"Let us see," replied Germain, his face instantly assuming the reserved expression of a man compelled to act on the defensive.

"You know that, in arranging the accounts of the property my wife holds in right of her mother," resumed Durvest, "we left out of the question her share in the Noisetière, giving up to you the full enjoyment of this domain."

"By paying you a rent of a hundred louis!" interrupted the merchant.

"Representing a capital of about fifty thousand francs."

"And is not this your due for your quarter of the Noisetière, the total value of which is estimated at two hundred thousand francs?"

"Excuse me, father-in-law," interrupted Durvest. "In this estimate neither the outbuildings, the forests, nor the ponds have been included; and the chateau, with its dependencies, is worth at least six hundred thousand francs."

"Well?" asked Germain, who did not see at what his son-in-law was aiming.

"Well, six hundred thousand francs would give me, as the share of Madame Durvest, the fifty thousand crowns which I need."

"What say you? Sell my country-house! Do you forget that it is my work, my pride? that I am accustomed to it?"

"I do not say this," replied Durvest; "but this money is indispensable to me."

"Pardieu! You may find it elsewhere, then!" exclaimed Germain, rising. "The Noisetière will not be sold, I can tell you."

"It must be!" replied Durvest, also rising.

"And who will compel me to it, if you please?"

"The law, which says (article 815): *No one can prevent the division of property.*"

"That is to say, you will demand the sale."

"With regret."

"Wo be to you if you do it, sir!" exclaimed Germain, extending his hand menacingly. "I will see my daughter; she will not suffer it."

"You are mistaken."

"How?"

"I have her authority."

"It is false."

"You are not polite, father-in-law," said the merchant; "but, to prove the truth of my words, here is her act, signed, sealed, and registered, giving me a right to plead before all the tribunals of France and Navarre."

"Is it possible that my daughter could sign such a deed?" said Fresneau, turning pale.

"I have told you that I must have this hundred and fifty thousand francs."

"And would my daughter for that sum expose her father to a lawsuit?" exclaimed Germain, with passionate sorrow. "Would she attempt to drive me from a home where I have seen the trees grow up, whose flowers I have planted, where all my affections are centred?"

"What would you have, father-in-law? Your daughter cannot sacrifice her advantages to your fancies; after all, you can find a country-house elsewhere. Madame Durvest is rational; you have educated her to understand her interests, and not to sacrifice them to sentiment, as you just now said. Well, she remembers your lessons. To each his right, to each his due; this is the only just and safe law, according to your own words."

"Indeed!" said Germain, bitterly. "And I did not expect they would be so soon turned against me; but cannot my daughter wait until I am dead? I am already old, and cannot live long."

"Fie, father-in-law! You are as strong as the Cathedral of Orleans; and we are in haste. I must have these hundred and fifty thousand francs in less than six months."

"That is to say, you give me no more time to seek a home elsewhere."

"I must do as I can, father-in-law."

"Very well!" exclaimed the merchant, purple with anger, and with his fist doubled; "but hear what I have to say to you, sir. While I can pay a single note, you shall not sell the Noisetière."

"We shall see."

"Have you anything more to say to me?"

"Nothing."

"Then I wish you a pleasant journey," interrupted Germain, hastily.

Durvest looked at him with an air of astonishment.

"That is to say, you send me away," resumed

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he; "very well, I am a dutiful son. I am going to Orleans to regulate some business; I will return in a few days for your final decision."

"It will be useless, sir."

"Pardon me," replied the speculator, seizing his hat. "You should not drive us to extremities. Good-by, father-in-law."

He saluted Germain Fresneau, and went out; but hardly had he disappeared when the latter fell back in his chair, almost suffocated with anger and grief.

V.

The good fortune which had attended Germain in all his undertakings, the kind of influence which wealth had given him, had accustomed him to see his wishes obeyed; so the pretensions of his son-in-law excited in him an indignation with difficulty suppressed. It is a fact of daily observation that selfish people receive injuries with less patience than others. They are far from being cold; their isolation proceeds not from insensibility, but from self-love. They are so absorbed in themselves as to have no affection to bestow on mankind; but whenever the idol of their worship, self, is touched, their hearts revolt, and cry out against it.

The conversation which M. Fresneau had just held with his son-in-law had thrown him into an agitation which reflection was far from subduing. The idea that he must leave a dwelling built by himself, and where he had hoped to die, affected him greatly; but he was especially humbled as he thought that the Noisetière might belong to another. Attacked at once in his affections, his habits, and his vanity, he gave way as before a severe and unexpected blow. George, to whom he had imparted the intentions of Durvest, received his indignation coldly. The son, too, had calculated that the sale of the estate might turn to his profit; so he hastened to cut short explanations by communicating to his father a letter, in which some very advantageous business was proposed to him, but which required his immediate departure for Saumur.

"Go," said the grieved merchant; "I can defend myself alone."

But this species of desertion completed his trials. He passed a part of the day in a state of increasing exaltation, forming a thousand plans to defeat those of Durvest; at last, towards evening, he became feverish. He was obliged to go to bed; and Cousin Maurice anxiously summoned a physician.

VI.

The first gleams of day were penetrating the closed blinds, and a night-lamp, placed in a corner of the room, was almost extinct, while Henri and his daughter, reclining each in an arm-chair, were asleep before the dying fire.

Suddenly, a hand put aside the closed curtains of the alcove; and the face of Germain Fresneau looked out, pale and thin. Scarcely out of danger, this was the first time for a fortnight that he had permitted his nurses an instant of repose, and partially recovered the exercise of his faculties. He looked for an instant at the professor and the young girl, then called the latter in a faint tone; both heard and rose at the same time.

"My uncle is awake," said Emma, approaching him.

"Yes, little one," replied the merchant, with a smile.

"And how do you find yourself?" asked Henri.

"Very well, brother; very well now."

"I am glad of it!" murmured the young girl. "The physician said that this crisis would save him."

"Save me!" repeated Germain. "Have I then been very sick, my friends?"

"Enough so to make us very anxious."

"Indeed, it does seem as though I had been suffering; and I remember now to have seen you always beside my bed."

"With Cousin Maurice, who has never left you."

"And George," asked the invalid; "where is he?"

The father and daughter seemed embarrassed.

"He was ignorant of your danger," said Henri, at last. "He went away on the morning of the day on which you were taken sick."

"Leaving me alone?"

"No; he had written to us to come."

"Is it true?"

"I have his letter here."

"Show it to me."

"Not yet."

"I must see it, Henri; give it to me," repeated the invalid.

The professor sought in his pocket-book, and handed his brother the following billet:—

"My Dear Uncle: My father is sick; and I am forced to depart for Saumur, as the least delay would cause my failure in business of importance. Send Emma to the Noisetière if you cannot come hither yourself; for the

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physician seems anxious, and has declared that my father needs careful attentions. I must go without waiting for you, that I may improve the first conveyance; but come to-day, if possible.

"GEORGE."

The merchant read the letter twice; then, turning his eyes towards his brother, said—

"And so you came with your daughter."

"Immediately."

"Were you not afraid that your absence would perhaps injure your interests—be the occasion of your losing your professorship?"

"I did not think of it," replied the professor.

"No," murmured Germain, pensively, "you thought only of my sufferings, while George was absorbed in his own interests; but this letter is not the only one you have to show me. Durvest must have written."

"I do not know," said the professor, embarrassed.

"What, nothing from him?"

"Pardon me," interrupted Emma, "this packet"—

Her father made a sign to her, but too late; Germain seized the document, and glanced over it.

"An assignment of my property," said he. "Oh, I expected this! It should be placed beside George's letter, brother; it is a fruit from the same seed."

And, clasping his hands with a profound grief, he exclaimed—

"This, then, is the reward of so much effort! Others, who leave to their children only poverty, obtain gratitude; and I, who have rendered them rich, happy, they forsake or treat as an enemy; but what have I done to them, Henri, that they should not love me?"

"Nothing, brother," said the professor, gently, "only you have taught them to disregard the impulses of the heart; and the culture of arithmetic has killed in them that of the sentiments. I have often told you that interest creates partners, but only affection the family."

"Then I have none," replied the merchant, despairingly.

"You are quite mistaken, cousin," said Maurice, who had just entered, and overheard the last words pronounced by Henri; "you are mistaken, cousin. Look at your side, and you will see one who has always been attached to you for your own sake."

"Then let her never leave me!" exclaimed Germain, opening his arms to his brother and Emma, "for I feel now that there is no happiness in life but in loving."

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THE WRONG BABY.

"Where yet was ever found a mother
Would give her booby* for another?"—GAY.

KREDDLES I take to be a capital fellow. But possibly, my dear friend (I beg respectfully thus to indicate the present reader), this adjective being somewhat amplified of late, you and I may differ as to our respective notions of capital fellows. You may have founded your *beau idéal* of the character upon a tall, well-looking, rollicking blade, long versed and critically accurate in spirituous compounds and fumigating plants! of shoulder-slapping, cash-borrowing propensities, and who in pleasant lyric measure defines the loftiest efforts of human wisdom and the triumph of hygienic science as being to drive away dull care.

Admitting the fascinations of this alcoholic geniality, I am free to confess that *my* capital fellow must be considered to be founded on a different model.

Mr. Arthur Kreddles was a gentleman whom no blindness of friendship could have converted into tall, well-formed, and black-haired. Presuming him (which I very much doubt) to have ever had an enemy, the force of detraction might have outlined him as short, and red-haired, without any extreme divergence from the facts.

Overlooking, as any one above five feet ten might easily do, these trifling personalities, the capital qualifications were easily discernible. A capital house, a capital wife, a capital baby, with *the* capital to condition them in elegant comfort, united to the temperament of a jovial, kind-hearted, friendly disposed gentleman, are, if you please, my tintings to throw forward on the canvas a capital fellow.

By what lucky accident I made the acquaintance of my friend Kreddles may come out by and by; enough to say now that Larkspur Villa was always open house to me, and after banking hours I invariably pocketed the newspaper, strolled up the hill to the Villa, and rambling through the beautiful grounds in summer, or sitting over the fire in winter, myself and friends passed many agreeable evenings.

At these times out came the newspaper and the newest politics; small talk and scandal revivified the waning conversation. It so chanced that about this juncture politics were becoming rather dull, small talk "small by degrees and beautifully less," and scandal deprived of the *marque piquant* which is alone its passport into polite society.

Bewailing one day the barren unprofitableness of the ordinary newspaper ground, we suddenly opened up a new vein of interest in the advertising department.

By far the most popular column with us, however, was that containing the speculative advertisements, "To CAPITALISTS," "PARTNERSHIP," and the like; wherein we found that some disinterested creature was anxious to confer a fortune of "Ten thousand per annum and no risk," for the trifling outlay of fifty pounds; that a gentleman had recently succeeded in perfecting an invention of a nature to create an instantaneous and overwhelming demand for the entire assignment of the patent, for which large sums had been offered the inventor, but he couldn't think of parting with such a certain source of immense income, and therefore offers a nineteenth and half thirty-first and three-quarters for a merely nominal consideration, under peculiar circumstances, and to complete a government contract, &c. I had noticed my friend Kreddles more than usually attentive during my reading of these veracious announcements; and one evening, on making my usual move for departure, he gave an intelligible wink to remain until after his wife had vanished with the chamber candlestick. We were soon alone, and Kreddles, shuffling in his seat, at length unbuttoned his waistcoat, and, driving his hands into the tops of his trowsers, struck at once into the theme of his cogitations.

"Of course the majority are absurd schemes, but it strikes me a good thing *might* be picked up, some time or other," he said.

I didn't quite understand what he meant, and told him so.

"Turn up knaves oftener than anything else, I dare say," soliloquized my friend, unheeding me, "but I can't help thinking, if you go carefully through the pack, you 'll come to the trump card at last. Just read that again," he said, turning to me.

"Read what again?"

"That fellow's advertisement—the invention—L. I., or some such letters."

"L. Y.; here we have it.

* *Quære*—baby

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"'To Small Capitalists.—A certain fortune for a few hundred pounds. Any gentleman advancing the advertiser from one to two hundred pounds, may have the half share of the most valuable and extraordinary invention of the age, which only requires to be known to be in instant demand by every family in the civilized world. This novel and beautiful invention combines domestic economy and social happiness with the promotion of a delightful art. The profits incalculable. Direct, with real name and address, L. Y., General Post Office, St. Martin's-le-Grand, London.'"*

"No harm in just making an inquiry," said Mr. Kreddles.

"None at all," I asserted.

"Well, I was thinking, if you don't mind, Phil"—

"Dare say I sha'n't—go on."

But it is needless to give *in extenso* a conversation the force and brilliancy whereof may be inferred from the foregoing specimen. Suffice it, in a condensed paragraph, to say that, in the hasty preceding sketch I have given of my friend Kreddles, certain *soft* tintings must by no means be omitted. Shrewd in the main, he was on some points childishly credulous, and above all a firm sharer in a very common faith that *some* reliance might be placed even upon the most vague and inflated promises. L. Y.'s tempting bait, acting upon a predisposed temperament, did the rest, and he resolved, as he said, "to have a fling at the affair." To make inquiries and enter upon a correspondence himself was, however, undesirable, as this would have involved a business partnership with Mrs. Kreddles, a lady to whom her husband was most dotingly attached; and who, combining the pleasant habit of supervising all his correspondence with an intense horror of anything in the form of a speculation, thus became an impossible ally. Kreddles's petition to me was that I would undertake the preliminary steps—write for information, and, as I chanced to have business in town in a day or two, arrange for an interview with the advertiser.

These mere inquiries "in the first instance" would be as dull and commonplace as the introduction to a Christmas pantomime; so clear the stage and let the transformations take place: presto vanish "L. Y.," Post Office, London, appear Valentine Spatchcock, 9½ Crow Court, Mutton Lane, Saffron Hill, two pair front, and please to pull the middle bell. This latter direction was given me on arriving at L. Y.'s residence by a young lady with hair profusely powdered with soot, short dress trimmed with cinders, open (heel) work stocking, and shoes worn decidedly down behind. Having delivered these instructions, the lady descended (apparently through a stage trap); thus preventing my respectfully pointing out that it was an essential condition in any gentleman's ringing a bell to have a bell to ring; and neither the middle nor any other handle fulfilling this acoustic property, I was compelled by necessity to ascend the stairs, and by my usual ill-luck to kick *over* a pail and *at* a child, completing my evolutions by plunging through a door, which at once brought me into the august presence of Mr. Valentine Spatchcock.

It was a terribly dingy room, and my correspondent sat at a deeply soiled and worn green baize desk, surrounded by a heterogeneous mass of papers, looking as people generally do who wish to be found preternaturally busy, and as if it would be rather an impertinent intrusion than otherwise to interrupt them by begging their acceptance of a fifty pound note. He appeared stale, temporally speaking, and I thought fresh, spiritually considered; any way, he was a total abstainer, on sanitary grounds, and I felt convinced must have muddled his mind so completely with "patents" and "registrations," and the like, as to labor under the hallucination that washing his face and hands was a registered operation, and the patent had not expired. A mistaken impression I conceived he extended also to hair-brushes and clean linen.

Mr. Spatchcock, begging to be excused until he had finished the concoction of a very important communication, which, as far as I could see, consisted in writing nothing with a dry pen upon some ink-bedabbled blotting-paper, motioned me to a seat—a courtesy whereof I did not immediately avail myself, from a feeling of commiseration for the evidently feeble and rheumatic condition of that article of furniture. Being the only seat unoccupied, however (Mr. Spatchcock had the other), I sat down presently, and contemplated the inventor—a little, wiry, sharp-eyed personage, whose hair seemed rather to have broken out on different portions of his face than to have regularly grown anywhere, except that on the "imperial" part of his chin there was a rather larger hirsute excrescence than elsewhere.

A brief episodical reference being made to our foregone correspondence, Mr. Spatchcock con

* An actual copy of an advertisement in the Times about four years since, and I may here add that the principal incidents in this little sketch are derived substantially from facts.—AUTHOR, W. G.

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cluded his urgent letter, which, however, he forgot to send to anybody, and laying on the desk before him a selection from the papers by his side, turned with a whole catechism of questions written in his face to me.

"Pray, sir, are you a married man?"

I lamented I had not that distinguished privilege.

"Then, sir, under those melancholy circumstances—but, by the by, if a fair question, may I ask your age?"

I mentioned it.

"And in receipt of a moderate income, no doubt?"

"Tolerably so."

"Well, now, sir," continued Mr. Spatchcock, rummaging out a paper which he produced, "I have here the Registrar-General's Report—ah! no! oh, yes. Here we have it, 'Statistics of Marriages'—age 20 to 30. Now, considering your age and position in life, sir, there is a fraction above eighty-nine and three-quarters per cent. against your remaining single. You ought to marry. It strikes me," continued Mr. Spatchcock, throwing down the paper with a determined air, "I have an invention that would remedy this anomalous state of things, and increase the consumption of marrying women. Then, sir, being an unmarried man, you will scarcely have had much experience in the care and management of infants?"

I admitted that on the subject of babies I was open to considerable enlightenment.

"But are probably sufficiently acquainted with infantile natural history to be aware that many babies are addicted to the practice of crying, squalling, chuckling, gurgling, shrieking, and indulging in other irritating or offensive noises?"

I replied that I certainly was informed of the fascinating accomplishments in question; in fact, the appalling contingency of having a "screamer" every night had been the beacon-warning held out to me by easy-going old bachelors against the vortex of matrimony.

"And pray, sir," continued Mr. Spatchcock, pursing up his eyebrows, and putting his pen to the corner of his mouth, as though coming to a poser now, "do you know *why* the child cries?"

I am afraid I murmured something about its being actuated by stomachic influences, or not being able to help it.

"Yes, sir, it can help it, and it would help it," replied the advertiser, emphatically, "if its tastes, feelings, sympathies, and faculties were properly comprehended and gratified. Men and women are children of a larger growth, the child is father of the man, and by a parity of reasoning we must possess in infancy an instalment of the very same faculties and sensations developed in maturer years. Is not this clear to you, sir?"

I assented to the lucidity of the premises.

"Child hungry, feed it; same with man. When tired, go to sleep; child also. But the mistake——What is it, Betsy?" This to the young lady who had lately made the mysterious descent, and now in an equally mysterious manner appears before us. "What is it?" said Mr. Spatchcock.

"Boot's been sewed—thrip-pence," said Betsy.

"That's right," said Mr. Spatchcock; "leave the boot and call again."

The young lady softly murmured a response to the effect of the "boy's waitin'," but descended with the message as desired.

"Now, the mistake that appears to have been made," continued the boot-owner, "in reference to babies is this, that while giving credit to the infant generation for eyes, nose, and mouth, nobody seems to be aware that they possess an ear; in other words, it is not presumed they have the faculty of comprehension and discrimination. Quite wrong. Now, don't you think," said the inventor, looking at me as a man who would rather like to be contradicted, if I could conveniently do it, "don't you think that it is a mistake to contend that an infant is not possessed of an ear?"

I asserted that, so far as my observation extended, I would even venture to maintain the infantile possession of two such appendages, as a general fact.

"Consequently—— Now, Betsy, you mustn't interrupt us."

"Boy says he won't go a-thout the thrip-pence," said the dramatic young lady, who had again suddenly appeared upon the scene.

"Ver-ry well," returned Mr. Spatchcock, pleasantly, "then desire him to bring change for a ten-pound note, and I'll pay him his demand in full immediately." And this device never, I presume, having been tried before upon the present victim, succeeded in effecting his dispersion. Mr. Spatchcock continued his argument. "Thereupon, I contend that, in order to soothe the natural irritability of infancy, the discriminating powers must be consulted. Now, how stands the fact? You attempt to quiet the child by singing; but is it not notorious that the vocal efforts of servants in general, and nursemaids in particular, are deplorably feeble and inefficient? Is not the mode in which the

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whole tribe of your 'rock-a-bys,' and 'lull-a-bys,' and 'hush-a-bys,' are vocalized, an insult to the musical taste and critical acumen of every patron of the pap-boat?"

The learned discoverer had worked himself into such a state of enthusiasm by this time that he had risen to the table in the attitude of a public lecturer, and, with some papers in his hand, was haranguing me in the character of audience. Of course, under such circumstances, it would have been an unseemly interruption to disturb the meeting by a remark, and I, therefore, remained silent, as the lecturer proceeded.

"Now what is the remedy for this state of things? Clearly, a cradle—a musical cradle—which, by combining the advantages of a cot and a musical instrument, may furnish the recumbent infant with appropriate melodies, accurately harmonized and instrumented, and by thus awakening what intellectual faculties the child possesses, may, by exciting its attention, counteract every tendency to restlessness and fractiousness; do I make myself understood?"

The meeting respectfully bowed.

"But this is only a part, and the least part, of the advantages of this important invention; there is not only an artistic, but a pecuniary gain. The nurse, whose badly performed duty it generally is to keep the child quiet, may be dispensed with! The child will keep itself quiet, and be its own performer on its own instrument! By a beautiful mechanical contrivance, whereby the cradle oscillates upon valves as the baby moves from side to side prior to sleeping, a delicious and soothing stream of melody is produced, that cannot fail to exercise the most tranquillizing effect! Now, sir, for the economics of our plan: I have here a statement, tabulated from the Registrar's report, in which the percentage of gentlemen who might marry and don't is thus analyzed. It is estimated that of every hundred marriageable men,

Nine and a half per cent. state they don't see the pull of it.

Seventeen and a quarter per cent. prefer Evans's.

Four per cent. are fast men, and may be omitted as undesirable husbands in any case.

Ten and a quarter per cent. have entered upon more intimate relations with their tailors, and are considered in a most desperate condition.

Nine per cent. have commenced writing poetry, and are computed still more promising, in fact, decidedly *promised* cases.

The ninth part of one per cent. cannot get anybody to have him—and, mark this!—

Forty-nine and eight-ninths per cent. would marry at once, *if it wasn't for the bother of the babies and the expense of the nurse!*

So that, with the trifling and insignificant exception of the ninth part of a man, fifty human beings out of every hundred are deprived of matrimonial blessings from considerations which will be removed by the musical cradle. Are you satisfied, sir?"

Satisfied! I should think such a statement calculated to make an aspiring bachelor very dissatisfied.

The lecturer was again among his documents as he proceeded. "Thus much for the value of the invention; now for the probable demand. Babies being an article of universal production, it follows that cradles must be a commodity of general consumption; and it is calculated from the most careful returns, extending over several years, that every seven babies will, on an average, consume four cradles. The consumption, therefore, will be enormous."

The speaker having enumerated other advantages of his invention, and stated that he had a full-sized model duly prepared, concluded his address by compounding and drinking a glass of cold spirits and water; to which he at first hospitably invited his audience, and gracefully and even carefully resumed his seat. It was so far an effective speech that, having duly reported it to my friend Kreddles, Mr. Spatchcock received an invitation to visit Larkspur Villa in the course of the following week, bringing with him the model of his "Improved Patent Musical Cradle."

The loving pair at the sunny little villa, on concluding breakfast, have now strolled out upon and beyond their own grounds on a customary early ramble. Johnny Quick has been desired to permit the breakfast equipage to remain in anticipation of a gentleman visitor by the first morning train from town, and is now following intently with her eyes the retreating couple, in undisguised admiration of their affectionate demeanor, when she was interrupted by a ring at the gate.

The arrival, as Johnny had been forewarned, proves to be that of the gentleman expected by the first train, respecting whose entertainment pending the return of his host, Miss Quick has received all needful instructions. She, therefore, ushers the visitor into the breakfast-room, not without some hesitation, permitting the entrance, with him, of a porter bearing a large package enveloped in a brown Holland wrapper. This duly deposited on the carpet, and a slight personal altercation on the question of porterage at length adjusted, the triumphant porter is warned off the premises, threatened with legal penalties. Mr. Spatchcock turns with a beam-

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ing smile to the breakfast-table and Miss Johnny.

"Well, my dear—master and mistress not down yet? They breakfast late," said the visitor, affectionately glancing at the table.

"Not them!" said Miss Quick. "Been out two hours and better."

"Oh!" said Mr. Spatchcock, with a falling countenance. "They *have* breakfasted."

"*Tow* be sure. Tea or coffee, mister?" inquired Johnny, shrewdly guessing the nature of the internal feelings that prompted her visitor's curiosity.

Mr. Spatchcock's genius was of that happy order, accommodating itself to all people and circumstances with equal facility; indeed, possessing this adulterated quality, it could scarcely be said to be genius at all, it being notorious that the higher faculty does not, in the majority of instances, admit of any coarse adaptation to the exigencies of vulgar existence. No; Mr. Spatchcock's genius is not of the heavenly order; he is playing the *bon vivant* to a mere country serving wench, prompted by a very earthly inspiration towards a good breakfast; so, rubbing his hands cheerfully, he affably remarks—

"Your perceptive faculties, Kitty, my love"—

"T'ant Kitty."

"Of course not; who said it was? Emily? Mary? Jane? Lucretia?"

"You'd never guess, mister. He! he!—it be Johnny—Johnny Quick."

"Guess it in a moment, now you've told me—Johnny, very elegant, lady-like name. Well, Johnny, as I say—your perceptive faculties do equal honor to your head and your heart. I have *not* breakfasted?"

"Your hot rolls didn't come in time, and you could not breakfast before you come'd. He! he!"

"Ha! ha! Johnny, you're a wag."

"Lor! be I, sir—that be because I don't know any better. I never had any scholarship."

Finding her sparkling friend's exertions at the breakfast-table so unremitting as to render conversation undesirable, Johnny, with the greatest delicacy and considerateness, asks, "Do you know master and missus, sir?"

Gentlemen of Mr. Spatchcock's calibre always do know, or profess to know something of everybody; accordingly, he promptly replied—

"Slightly, I think, Johnny—why?"

"Ain't they good 'uns to love, neither?" responded Miss Quick, communicatively. "You should see just master a kissing missus, and calling her all the heavenliest bloomer-naries over the flowery bed."

"Ay, ay; turtles are they."

"No, that bea'nt what they call themselves. Master says missus is a duck, and she calls him a goose."

"I begin to be afraid," said Mr. Spatchcock, who, having terminated with the cold fowl, now breaks out afresh upon some newly discovered eggs, "that you've no poetry in your nature, Johnny."

"I be too healthy like for that."

"Too healthy—for what?"

"For the poetry complaint. There was a young scholard from Lunnun came to see master; he had it cruel bad sure—ly; took such lots of doctor's stuff; but the poetry complaint had got in his bones, they supposed, and he died of it at last," said Johnny, solemnly quoting this awful warning against poetical indulgences. "I say, mister," continued Miss Quick, as a new idea seized her, "He! he! *you* be in love, *I* know."

"Undoubtedly, when I look upon your lovely form, Johnny, I'm your faithful Valentine—that's my name."

"He! he! You be in love," said Johnny, "with your breakfast; that be all."

"Don't say that's *all*," remonstrated Miss Quick's *impromptu* admirer, rising as he concluded the meal in question. "I assure you, Johnny, I throw a great deal of affectionate attachment into dinner and supper. Hallo! these must be the turtles," continued Mr. Spatchcock, as the happy pair appeared returning in the distance; while Johnny, gathering together the breakfast china, grinningly left the room, exclaiming—

"Dear heart, what a funny gentleman he be, sure—ly, but he looks as if he be gotten a touch of the poetry complaint."

Mr. Kreddles has not behaved like a man; he has explained the nature of his proposed investment to his pretty and affectionate wife, and thus deprived Mrs. Sowerberry, relict of an unlamented sulphur merchant at Verjuice Cottage, of all scandalous capital to trade with at her customary tea-table *rialtos*. Had he, as any right-minded brute would have done, deceived or quarrelled with Mrs. Kreddles in the matter, he would have afforded his gratified friends a happy and prolific theme for commentary on the pusillanimous endurances of that "poor little chit," his wife, in vivid contrast with his own heartless monstrosities.

However, the melancholy fact is, Kreddles has told his lady all about the matter, and,

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strange to say, she has most unexpectedly approved of the project, first stipulating, however, that a trial of the invention may be made at the villa, and in the infantile person of their own exemplary and irreproachable "tottles."

It is in fulfilment of these conditions that Mr. Spatchcock has now arrived, duly provided with the "model," beside which an ordinary cradle is placed, to and from which the infant Kreddles is removed chirrupingly, unconscious of the experimental purposes to which it is being personally applied.

"Nothing, I venture to say, can be more satisfactory," said the inventor, after explaining the general nature of his improvement, and benignly contemplating the hope of the Kreddles, softly slumbering in the patent cradle. "You can detect, I think, upon the features of your intelligent infant the gratified and composed expression that is alone produced by musical sounds. In fact it may be at this moment tranquilly reflecting on some new harmonious combination. The child is clearly in a state of *musical composition*."

And now Mr. Spatchcock reveals a delicately interesting "family secret." He is a married man, blessed like Mr. Kreddles with an amiable wife and a charming first-born, possessing the precise testing qualities of extreme restlessness and an agreeably exciting tendency to yell fearfully with, or without, provocation, whereof the amiable infant Kreddles is deficient. It fortunately happens that Mr. Spatchcock's lady has travelled with him, attracted by the pleasures of the trip, but being slightly indisposed, and the invitation only extending to himself, Mrs. Spatchcock has not presumed on an introduction; the lady has accordingly been left at the tavern adjoining the railway terminus, together with the vociferating infant who has accompanied the party from obvious nutritious considerations. A gracious message is soon dispatched to the inventor's lady, inviting her presence at the villa in company with the irritant babe; and, arriving in due time, the experimental offspring is quickly placed in the vacant cradle, justifying the warmest encomiums on its vocal powers by a series of convulsive shrieks delivered with remarkable clearness and volume. The general appearance and demeanor of Mrs. Spatchcock lead to the conclusion that her husband exercised a sound discretion in hesitating as to that lady's introduction; and would have shown a still sounder wisdom had he not brought her at all, inasmuch as there are certain indications of Mrs. Spatchcock having made frequent references to a sandwich basket, long after the sandwiches had been eaten, and only a glass bottle remained. Attempting now to appease her infant, and rejecting with derision kind-hearted Mrs. Kreddles's suggestion that "there must be a pin somewhere," the half tipsy mother pinches the face, smartly slaps the hands, and infolds in a savage hug the heir of the Spatchcocks; and these endearments failing in effect, consigns the "brat" to its cradle again, with the encouraging intimation that "It'll stop its noise when it's had its cry out, and not before." Giving utterance to which gentle emotion, Mrs. Spatchcock withdrew into the garden.

This was somewhere about the position of affairs when I made my usual afternoon call at the villa. I noticed that the improved cradle had a contrivance attached to it something after the fashion of the bellows at the base of modern toys of dogs and other animals, and certainly emitted a rather pleasing melody on the cradle being rocked either by the child's restlessness or extraneous movement.

I am putting down exactly what occurred, and from that day to this have seen nothing more of the musical cradle; but if any ingenious mechanic or artificer can "work up" the notion, I beg him by all means to do so. I can say this much for the efficacy of the model that, on my arrival, the "cantankerous" infant was sleeping as calmly as Mrs. Kreddles's amiable little "precious;" but whether this resulted from the natural termination of the "cry," or might fairly be put down to the merits of the invention, I suppose the baby only knows. One rather funny coincidence I remember we observed was, that the infants, lying side by side, with musical and non-musical honors, had a decided resemblance to each other, and chanced to be *dressed precisely alike;* or appeared so to be to profane bachelor eyes; for, having made this remark to Mrs. Kreddles, I was indignantly put down as a matrimonial greenhorn, inasmuch as I clearly didn't know the difference between "longcloth" and "cambric," real coral beads and dried red berries, or the choicest Valenciennes lace and a base imitation.

Our little conclave soon descended from the nursery to one of Kreddles's capital dinners, whereat Mr. Spatchcock highly distinguished himself in brilliant dialogue and sparkling witticisms, rendered none the less spirited probably by the absence of his charming lady, whose indisposition—or rather that of her husband's to permit her appearance below—led to her dining with Susan in the nursery. Mr. Spatchcock, I recollect, almost entirely monopolized the conversation, and favored us with details respecting

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his own inventions and improvements in nearly every department of the arts, sciences, and domestic economy. All these valuable discoveries, it seemed, were set fast or impeded by some unaccountable error in specifications or drawings, delay at the patent-office, or culpable supineness of the government; a good many—by far the best—merely lacked the comparatively trifling amount "necessary for bringing them fairly before the public." We were rather startled between the pastry and cheese by Mr. Spatchcock producing a small ball about the size of a nutmeg from his waistcoat pocket, and politely handing it round, explaining its title to be that of the "patent explosive compound," and its agreeable property that of blowing a considerable distance from the foundations any lady or gentleman's house, under the roof of which it might be smartly struck or suddenly dropped. The dropping in the present case was, at the earnest solicitation of Kreddles and his wife, into the pond at the bottom of the garden, Johnny accompanying the inventor for the purpose, and ever after regarding the place of immersion with feelings of the liveliest terror.

Mr. Spatchcock now prepared to depart; the immediate business in hand was terminated by the inventor consenting to leave his "model" with Mr. Kreddles, in consideration of a small advance, and to wait a communication from the intending capitalist, to be addressed to him at some coffee-house at Fetter Lane, Mr. Spatchcock having vacated his former residence, and rather declining information as to his new abode, on grounds which the majority of inventive geniuses will find to be readily intelligible. Mr. Spatchcock soon appeared with her infant (the Kreddles's hope being still somnolent), and I became convoy to the railway station. Waiting here a few moments, I took occasion to scrutinize the spurious lace and coral decorating the Spatchcock offspring, and was forcibly impressed with the perfection whereto imitative art had arrived. Mrs. Spatchcock, noticing me, rather suddenly covered over the child's face with her shawl, and moved hastily from the spot; the bell rang, and the inventor and his family were now on their way to town.

The evening being fine, I made a rather lengthened *détour* on my return to the villa, from which, as I approached, and to my intense wonderment, sounds of reproach and altercation appeared to proceed. On entering, I found my placid friend Kreddles in a state of painful and extraordinary excitement, his amiable wife in violent hysterics, varied by frantic exclamations of, "Oh, the wretches! my precious Fanny! that drunken creature! oh! oh! do go, pray; do go! Arthur, fly directly! oh! that vile, careless Susan!"

"Be composed, my love," said Kreddles, evidently himself alarmed; "myself and H——— will follow them instantly; it must be an unintentional mistake."

"Oh! no, no; that dreadful woman took it on purpose; she saw what an angel our darling was, and hers was a—a—just the opposite—a squalling little wretch." Hereupon loud infantile screams were heard proceeding from Mr. Kreddles's nursery, and blending in the general lamentation. I looked at the papa, now assuming his coat and hat, for an explanation.

"We must go after these people; by some mistake, and the children being alike, and its being dark in the nursery, and Susan gone out"—

"The abominable girl," cried poor Mrs. Kreddles, "she shall leave to-morrow; oh, dear, oh, dear! Arthur, if you don't go this minute, I'll go myself; I think I'd better go with you."

"No, no, my dear," said Kreddles, "no necessity for that; we shall soon be back; make your mind easy; you must not fret, there's a love."

"But now I don't quite understand what has happened," I remarked.

"Those horrid swindling wretches have stolen my child," said Mrs. Kreddles; "*they've gone away with* THE WRONG BABY."

There was no electric telegraph in those days; but, on referring to my watch, I found the next train to town would be due in a few moments. To run into the road the nearest way, leaping the garden-fence, trot smartly a short cut to the station, which happened to be down hill, knock over the porter at the gate, who exclaimed, "*too* late, gents," jump into a carriage at the first door open, and find ourselves some miles nearer London, were of course but the events of a few moments. The opportunity now afforded for calm reflection placed before us the difficulties attending our pursuit.

The probability that the unnatural mother had either designedly made this exchange, or would be indifferent to a rectification of the error on discovering it; and that Mr. Spatchcock himself, with the lofty disregard of creative minds to their own immediate social affairs, would confirm the proverb as to paternal obliviousness on a question of infantile identity, and not know his own child, together with the vague and uncertain indication of the locality newly honored by Mr. Spatchcock's denizen-

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ship, all formed extremely embarrassing points for the gloomy, unhopeful meditations of myself and friend.

On arriving in London, we first unsuccessfully beat up the inventor's former retreat in Saffron Hill, retiring with a pressing request from the young lady skilled in ghostly disappearances, that, should our inquiries be crowned with success, we would be courteous enough to communicate the result to the "Missus," or to any of the numerous victimized victualling establishments adjacent, in whose books the celebrated patentee had been appropriately "registered." Our next point is the renowned mocha establishment, whereat some slight complication arises in consequence of Mr. Spatchcock being known only by initial, and not by name. Of all the men of letters quoted, however, we do not seem to recognize our friend as the gentleman who requests to be immediately furnished with a government situation of not less—more not objected to—than five hundred pounds per annum, payable quarterly and legally secured, for which he offers the handsome *douceur* of five per cent. on his first year's income tax, or, if preferred, the portrait of his great-grandmother in a gilt frame.

Nor do we believe Mr. Spatchcock to be the original of another gentleman who requires the loan of a few hundred pounds upon the most ample security; which security, we learn from the waiteress, is the manuscript of a five act tragedy, guaranteed never to have been acted at any theatre in London or the provinces Slightly mistrusting our 'first impression with reference to the latter advertiser, who is expected to call presently for his letters, we sit down in the desperate hope that the needy dramatist may prove to be our inventive friend.

We have waited but a short time, when a long-in-person and prolific-in-hair gentleman, enveloped in a cloak, worn very full, of dirty folds, and embroidered by a polished edge of sparkling grease, enters, and obtaining two letters from Harriet (to whom he delivers an important and comprehensive order for "a coffee, four thins, rasher, 'n egg, and half creases)," seats himself on the opposite side of our box. Having torn open his letters, "pished" and "pshawed" at the contents, and tossed the newspaper contemptuously aside, the dissatisfied dramatist (for this gentleman I felt sure it must be) favors his two fidgety neighbors with a glance. Commiserating our restlessness, or anxious to relieve his own excitement by unburdening his mind to somebody, the new-comer at length addresses us.

"Beg parding, gents, but was you thinking of going to the theaytre this evenin', at half money?"

We renounced any present idea of visiting a public entertainment at the half or even the whole nightly cost.

"Oh! because if you was going, I would have put you in two dress boxes for the 'Delphi,' a bargain;" and the speaker thereupon produced two authentic admissions to that establishment for the same evening, being the interesting occasion of Miss Cremorne's "ticket night."

Finding us proof even against this "unprecedented attraction," the dramatic gentleman awaits in silence the execution of his order, meanwhile again perusing his two letters with a scornful smile. An impulse I cannot explain, and is not of the least consequence if I could, prompts me to resume the conversation, by saying—

"You are connected with the theatres, sir?"

"Ye—es; that is, I write for them occasionally, but it's poor work."

"Indifferently paid?"

"No; not exactly that, but managers are so precious obstinate, won't be advised as to the sort of thing the public want; get up foolish light pieces; and audiences want plays with more backbone in them. However, it will come to an end; every fool must have his day."

"And no doubt, sir, you will have yours; you advocate the legitimate drama?"

"Yes! (no, coffee I told you, Harriet, not tea,) only there again, managers are out; they fancy nothing legitimate but Shakspeare, and Shakspeare's done up. There's plenty of modern Shakspeares about, if the fools of managers had the sense to know 'em when they see 'em. Why, *I've* written something, if it was properly put on the stage, would take the shine out of half the cursed revivals; but that's where it is, you see; you want the tin to lend the manager to get up your piece. Now, if I could just raise two hundred pounds, I could make my fortune; I am trying it. By the by," said the neglected author, as a sudden thought occurred to him, "perhaps you gents might know somebody that would suit my book?"

"Oh! a book is it?"

("Addled—regularly addled, I'm blessed if this egg isn't. Here, Harriet, take this back,") said the author, indignantly returning the condiment in question. "No, no, not a book—a romantic melodrama, just want about two hundred; would give security—a play I've *asked* five hundred for."

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We wished he might get it, and told him so.

"Doesn't look like it. I put an advertisement in the other day, and the only answer I've had are these two precious things," he said, producing the two recently arrived letters, "from two partnership agents, who'd put me on their lists for a sovereign apiece; that won't do. It ought to be easy to get. Why, there's a friend of mine got hold of an agreeable sort of gentleman in the country to go halves with him in a much more unlike spec' than mine—an harmonium cradle, I think he calls it—it was only a pantomime trick."

As our readers may imagine, we soon pricked up our ears at this, and, having carefully picked the dramatist's brains of the required directorial information, gave chase in a cab, and within twenty minutes had run down our game at his temporary lodgings in Lambeth; the luckless infant being in full cry at the death—Kreddles himself, having preserved his temper hitherto, flew at Spatchcock, on seeing him, like a bantam.

Nothing but the fear of being put down by my esteemed aunt as a Victoria dramatist prevents my giving in detail the scene that followed; elsewise you must admit, if you have any taste in transpontine literature, that an infuriated father seizing the ruffian who has robbed him of his infant, and fiercely demanding back his only child—the scene being laid in a crazy tumble-down building by the water-side—are very fair materials for a strikingly dramatic situation. Mr. Spatchcock is, however, a man of business, and not a dramatic artist; and apparently seeing there is something to be made by the incident, speedily dissolves the dramatic view of the question, and having, with my assistance, succeeded in bringing Mr. Kreddles to a partially tranquil frame of mind, the inventor observes—

"My dear sir, I am sure I regret any inconvenience, but pray let us discuss this affair like men of business."

"Have the child brought in, sir; I demand that," exclaimed Kreddles.

"Oh! certainly, no objection, I'm sure; Mrs. Spatchcock has just dropped off to sleep, but I will rouse her presently." A loud snore was heard from the adjoining chamber, in corroboration of this fact, as Mr. Spatchcock proceeded: "Meanwhile, permit me to observe that if I deliver up the child to you, we are still without security or guarantee for the *return of our own infant*." Mr. Kreddles gave a violent start: "I do not wish to impute anything," said the inventor deferentially; "but you hesitate to trust me, my dear sir—why should I trust you? It is just as reasonable to say you are feloniously detaining my child, as assert we are wrongfully in possession of yours. In point of fact, I hold your child in pawn; excuse me if I decline to give up the pledge without the ticket."

This was certainly a painfully unexpected position for poor Kreddles's "little pledge" to be placed in. I, of course, suggested that Mr. Spatchcock and his wife should accompany us in a post-chaise, and obtain their infantine ticket; but Mr. Spatchcock objected. "Quite impossible to-night; Mrs. Spatchcock is not in a fit state to travel, and really I wouldn't—not interfering in family matters—take upon myself to determine this extraordinary question of disputed identity."

"What on earth should I wish to detain your child for?" said Kreddles, incredulously.

"Can't possibly say," retorted Mr. Spatchcock, shrugging his shoulders; "there may be fifty reasons I know nothing of."

"Then I shall apply to the police," exclaimed Kreddles.

"I really wouldn't advise you," said the inventor, very coolly; "but, as I am willing to meet the difficulty, if possible, why—I really don't feel justified—but to oblige you—leave me some security for our child's return—say a fifty pound note, and take your infant away; ours to be given up on return of the security."

I am afraid I half grinned at the cool audacity of this proposal, contrasted with the puzzled air of the proprietor of Larkspur Villa; the infant subject of discussion, however, still airing its lungs to an extent bordering on convulsions, and the fright having already changed the tone of voice to an almost unrecognizable degree, I thought it best to advise my friend to assent to the conditions demanded; and, after much parleying, the infant Spatchcock was appraised at twenty pounds sterling, and the missing babe borne in triumph from its heartless custodians.

But even triumphs may be sometimes very embarrassing, and two gentlemen traversing a populous thoroughfare in Lambeth, bearing alternately in their arms an unappeasable infant, waking the echoes far and near, and assailed by the gibes of every paternal observer, and the reproaches of every maternal passer-by, need not be the theme of very bitter envy. We were, in truth, rather objects of sympathy than otherwise, and found it too in an unexpected quarter; no other than the breast of a benign cabman who drove us to the nearest posting-house, and was absolutely civil, although we paid him a mere trifle only over and above double his fare. Don't say the world is so bad, after all.

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Our post-chaise arrived at the villa about half past one in the morning. As we anticipated, there were lights in the lower room; Mr. Kreddles, of course, awaiting our return in a state of painful anxiety. Our infant charge being by this time gently slumbering on an extemporized bed on the opposite seat in the carriage, and Kreddles, fearing the sudden reaction on finding her child safe might be too much for the sensitive mother's shaken nerves, resolved to dispatch Johnny to the chaise, and we entered the room as we had left it; standing for a moment speechless at the sight before us; Mrs. Kreddles, instead of being prostrated by grief and fear, was comfortably seated at crochet beside a neatly laid supper-table radiant in smiling happiness! She jumped up instantly on seeing her husband, and with manifestly no emotion but wifely pleasure at his return, affectionately kissed him. "Oh, I'm so glad you've come back," said the pleased little lady; "of course, you found out the mistake. Ha! ha!"

"Yes, my love, I told you it must be only a mistake," said the puzzled Kreddles.

"How absurd, to be sure," continued his wife: "what a laugh people would have at us if it was known. Ha! ha! How did you find it out?"

"Well, my dear, rather in an accidental way," replied the bewildered husband, more and more surprised that the affectionate mother made no attempt to obtain a sight of her restored offspring.

"Come, sit down; I've kept supper waiting. What a shame to frighten the poor old fellow so;" this to her husband, with a kiss. Then, turning to me, she continued: "Now, H———, if you mention a word about this, I'll never introduce you to a nice young lady again, and I do expect some cousins of mine from Norfolk, in the autumn, very pretty girls, and plenty of money."

All this was delightful to me, and amazing to Kreddles, who presently said—

"I hope Johnny won't wake baby bringing her in."

"Bringing who in?" asked the wife.

"The baby—your baby—our baby—the baby we've brought back."

"Brought back!" exclaimed Mrs. Kreddles; "why you don't mean to tell me, Arthur, you've brought back that woman's poor little thing again?"

"Poor little thing! isn't it our child that was taken away in mistake?"

"NO! to be sure not—hasn't Susan told you? Ha! ha! I can't help it, Arthur; what unnatural wretches they must be. It was dear little Fanny in the cradle all right, but that tiresome Susan left the woman alone with the children, and I suppose she took a fancy to Fanny's beautiful cap and necklace, and so changed them on to her own child; and there was a pin inside the border of her baby's cap, as I thought, that made it so troublesome—and in the hurry looking for the cherry on Fanny's arm I couldn't see it—and we found it all out directly you had gone, and it's all right now; and I declare if I haven't laughed till I'm crying again. Do kiss me, Arthur!"

Mrs. Kreddles was more easily kissed than a determination in this new phase of the affair arrived at; however, it was resolved to make the best possible arrangements for Miss Spatchcock's accommodation that night, and restore her to her desolate parents in the morning. On arriving at the inventor's apartments in Lambeth, however, they were found tenantless, and only a note for Mr. Kreddles remaining.

It was from Mr. Spatchcock himself, announcing that he had availed himself of the twenty pounds last received, and a previous sum, to depart for a popular colony; that he was totally unaware, until our arrival, of any exchange of infants having been effected; and that, on making this discovery, the idea occurred to him of releasing his own child from the demoralizing influences of its mother's example, and placing it in a comfortable home by the strategy he had adopted.

He felt satisfied, he added, he might safely commend the infant to Mrs. Kreddles's motherly care, and he assured Mr. Kreddles that this promising child had given unmistakable evidences of the possession of rare and precocious musical talent, which could not fail, with cultivation, to be highly remunerative in a professional point of view, and was well worthy the attention of any capitalist as a most safe and lucrative investment.

* * * * *

I dotted down the above incidents a few months since, during a summer visit to my excellent friends at Larkspur Villa. We have been, according to custom, conning and laughing over the story of the musical cradle—and afterwards, left alone with my pen, I am conscious of a shrewd little face glancing up curiously at mine. It is an odd, rather than pretty, face, flowingly encompassed by flaxen hair, but by no means uninteresting or unattractive in 's expression.

"Well, Sissy, shall I tell you what I am doing?"

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"Please, pa—pa."

"Writing a long story about you."

"Please let me look, pa—pa."

It is Miss Cecilia Spatchcock who is arraying the author in the "borrowed plumes" of paternity, wickedly incited thereto by her adopted mamma, Mrs. Arthur Kreddles.

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THERE IS A FAIRY IN EVERY HEART: A FRENCH DREAM. I
Mayhew, Horace
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THERE IS A FAIRY IN EVERY HEART:

A FRENCH DREAM.

RELATED BY HORACE MAYHEW.

I

I was only sixteen, when the Fairy, of whom I am about to speak, appeared to me for the first time.

I recollect it was a beautiful evening in the month of May. I had wandered out into the fields—leaving the smoky town far behind me—and was roaming in all directions without any object before me, without a thought as to where I was going, or how I was to get home. I was dreaming—walking with my head in the clouds,—building golden castles in the air, and peopling them with all the persons I loved best. I sought the shadiest spots. The silence around me was a charm I would not have parted with for the grandest music in the world. The solitude, that alternately spoke and listened to me, and in all things sympathised with my troubled feelings, was a dear companion into whose ear I never tired of whispering all my sorrows, into whose tender eyes I could have gazed until nightfall.

It had been thus with me for some time past; Melancholy had thrown her gentle arms round my heart, and, with soft lullabys, had cradled it off to sleep. When in society I seemed as one that was dreaming, and longed to be far away, in some secret spot, by myself; and when I was by myself, I felt happy—so happy that I was loth to return to the world again as a boy is loth to return to school.

I saw the sun plunge, like a bold diver, into a burning sea of gold. I saw the shadows gradually walk down from the tops of the mountains, like black regiments of ghosts, and halt in the level plains below. I saw the lamps of the night lighted one by one in the great vault of Heaven, as if they were to burn there to keep watch over the dead body of the day. Each bush was musical with song; and in all directions the nightingales were singing, like children retiring to rest, their evening hymns. I heard the trees shudder as the first chill of the evening crept over them, and I heard the long grass bend under the breeze, as if it were preparing to lay itself down for the night. The moon, which had risen burning red, as though blushing to meet the first gaze of man, was reposing, tranquilly and radiantly, upon a couch of fleecy clouds, from which its rays fell, like a long streaming veil of silver, upon the dark shoulders of the earth.

Thus I wandered for hours, and at random, opening my boyish heart to every floating sound, to every gush of music or perfume, when I perceived a group of young girls, who were returning to the town. They advanced running, dancing, and singing. Their song was one of hope and love, and their fresh voices vibrated, in the entranced stillness of the scene, like the distant sound of a rippling cascade. I hid myself behind a hawthorn hedge, and saw them defile before me, similar to a cloud of those white mists, which, during the night, dance on the surface of a lake, and vanish at the first break of morning. I could distinguish, by the light of the stars, the colour of their hair and the smiling beauty of their features; I could hear the rustling of their dresses; and as they flew, lighter than any blossom, before me, I was filled with an influence sweeter even than any of the perfumes that made of the surrounding atmosphere a garden.

When they had flown out of sight, I became seized with a strange sensation. I sat down on the trunk of a tree; I clasped my forehead with my hands, and shutting myself out from the world, I was buried instantly in a deep melancholy, listening, heaving with excitement, endeavouring to explain the confused sounds and sights that were flitting and swarming round my imagination.

What I experienced, it would be impossible to describe. I felt my heart being weighed down to the earth, and ready to burst with the load that was apparently kneeling upon it. I felt a pressure, a heaviness that threatened to suffocate me. It was as if a new source of pleasure had suddenly sprung up in my nature, and wanted to escape to embellish the arid path of my existence. At last I cried, and I cannot tell you what strange pleasure I derived from the flowing of my tears!

How long did I remain in that state? When I arose, I beheld, a few steps in advance of me, a celestial being, who was gazing upon me with eyes of tenderness. A robe, whiter than the lillies, fell in graceful folds the whole length of her body, but still revealing on the grass, which they scarcely touched, a pair of naked feet, delicately small, and so dazzlingly white, with blue veins, they seemed like feet of living marble. Her fair hair circled lovingly round her neck, as if wishing to embrace it; her cheeks had the freshness and beauty of the flowers which crowned her head as with a diadem; her face and forehead had the whiteness of alabaster, in the midst of which bloomed her dark blue eyes, like a couple of violets in a field of snow, that had just opened at the first kiss of an April sun. Her arms were bare. One of her hands reclined gently on her breast, and with the other she beckoned me kindly towards her.

For a few minutes I remained dumb, fixed to the spot, wholly absorbed in the pleasure of contemplating her. She was so beautiful, so pure,—I felt etherealized by her presence. It seemed as if I was standing before an altar, and that I ought to kneel and pray, but I was afraid to move or speak, lest at the first sound she should vanish, and I should never see her more. She doubtlessly had come, like a good thought, from Heaven, for I observed that her beauty had none of the beauty of the daughters of this earth, and I could notice beaming round her a golden atmosphere which enveloped her as with a garment of light.

"Who art thou?" I said, trembling at my boldness in breaking the silence, and clasping my hands, ready to beg forgiveness for my impiety in addressing one so infinitely my superior.

"Young man," she replied, in a voice sweeter than the softest murmur of a midsummer's night, "I am the Fairy whom the king of all good geniuses locked up in thy breast at the moment of thy birth. I have been sleeping there ever since thou wert a baby in thy nurse's arms. This morning even I was bound in the soft folds of slumber. That slumber, however,, the first cry that has escaped from that breast has broken. I can sleep now no more. It is my duty henceforth to watch over thee."

"My life," she continued, as I listened breathlessly to her, "is made up of thy life. I am thy sister, and will be thy companion up to the day, when, falling away from thee like a faded flower from its stem, I shall abandon thee in the middle of the jonrney of which we shall have made the first half together. We shall not have far to travel, my young friend. The rose that lives but a morning is the image of my destiny. To love me do not wait until thou hast lost me, for not all thy tears, nor all thy regrets will ever revive me when once I am dead. Lose no time! My hand is armed neither with a magic branch, nor with an enchanted wand, and I have no other ornaments than the few flowers that wreath my temples; but I will endow thee with more treasures than a good Fairy ever threw into a king's cradle. I will place upon thy forehead a crown which many an emperor would be happy to purchase at the sacrifice of his own; I will put at thy disposal servants and dependents such as are rarely seen in a royal court. If thy feet are tired, a carriage shall carry thee when thou wilt. If the earth is cumbersome to thy young soul, thou shalt have wings which shall waft thee, as quick as incense, to Heaven. Invisible and yet present, I shall follow thee everywhere. Even at thy bedside, when thou art prostrate with sickness, I shall watch with maternal fondness, and colour thy dreams, and pour wine into thy fainting heart. Everywhere, and at every moment, thou shalt fell my joyful influence; I will embellish every spot thy foot touches. I will hang thy naked walls with drapery, and change thy rags into princely raiment. At night, thy pillow shall be as a mother's lap to thee, and I will breathe my soul into the whole universe that thou mayest see a hundred rosy fancies every morning thou awakest. Our companionship shall be festooned with eternal roses. Our enjoyments shall know no morrow. Our longest feasts be without the repentance even of a headache. The whole firmament of our joint being shall be arched with one unchanging rainbow!"

"Only my young friend," and here she slightly paused, and a small accent of despair crept, like a serpent, into the fair bower of her words; "all these rich gifts that I bring thee with lavish hands, learn to appreciate them; seize them before they escape thy grasp, try to touch them without soiling them, try to enjoy them without exhausting their enjoyment; husband them, and use them sparingly and prudently so that the stock may last thee for the remaining half of the journey thou art doomed to travel alone, without me. My beloved friend," (her voice fell plaintively as she spoke the concluding words), "I have already told thee, I have but a brief period to live; but it depends on the love and gratitude thou wilt show me, to prolong my fragile and beautiful existence beyond its natural limits. Compare me to one of those tender plants which die, if deprived of the sunshine and care they need, and love and protect me accordingly. My feet are delicate, thou must not fatigue them too much in following thee. The bloom on my cheeks is more evanescent than that of the tenderest flower. If thou valuest it, thou wilt not expose it to every cutting wind, wilt not allow it to be dried up by too much heat, or to wither from too much shade. Watch over me, long and truly, as a thing thou dearly lovest. Recollect that, if neglected, I am soon lost; and that, when lost, I am never regained. Watch over me unceasingly, so that when thou dost lose me, no remorse may poison thy anguish, and make thee grieve the more over my loss. So live in peace and purity that the recollection of me may always be a cheerful one, and that thou mayest bask in my memory, and feel a happy glow from it, long after I shall have ceased to illumine thy existence."

Saying these words, like a guardian angel who leans over a child's cot, she bent towards me, and I felt her chaste lips upon my forehead. I opened my arms to seize her, but already had the beautiful apparition vanished like a dream.

Was it not a dream, in truth? I still continued my walk through the wood, not knowing where I was going. At one moment I was running, like a child chasing butterflies; the next, I was sauntering lazily along, like a child going to school. I cried, and should have been puzzled to say why I was crying. I spoke to the flowers, the trees, the stars, and was astonished I received no answer. I felt a love within me that could love all things. The new source of pleasure I had experienced within me had seemingly burst through the rock of my nature, and was overflowing all objects. I was swimming in an endless ocean of joy—was flying through an illimitable space of happiness, such as I had never known before!

As daylight began to waken up the earth, it seemed to me as if I was seeing for the first time the beauties of creation. My eyes at length were opened! my heart beat rapidly! I breathed the air like one just escaped from a dungeon; I ran wildly about like a dog let loose from his kennel, and at one moment I thought my soul was flying away from my body, light, free, and happy, and was ascending slowly to heaven with those mists which the sun was lifting from the hill-tops. From the height of the eminence where I stood, I threw a conquering look over the country as far as the horizon; and in my pride I thought that the earth had been created expressly for me, and that I—I was master of all the world!

II.

I was scarcely thirty years of age, when the Fairy appeared to me for the second time!

I recollect it was on a sombre evening in October. I had left the town all by myself; I was wandering I knew not where. I was unhappy, discontented, and spiritless. I had been in that state some time, and, without having any enjoyment for it, I was roaming wherever chance directed me in search of solitude.

The sky was low, and craped with mourning. A hissing wind seemed to take a cruel pleasure in cutting off the few leaves that were still cling-

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ing, as for their lives, to the trees. The hedges were bare. Now and then a lugubrious barking from some distant farm broke upon the chilling silence, and a slender thread of blue smoke was seen through the naked branches, crawling up into the lazy air. These were the only revelations of life in the gloomy landscape. However, a few birds flew hastily by, as if they wished to escape from the desolation of the scene; whilst a few black crows loitered in the dead fields, seemingly enjoying the general gloom.

I sauntered from one dreary spot to another, joining the desolation of my heart to that which surrounded me. The melancholy of despair had frost-bound all my faculties, drying up the little life-blood that was left in me. I sat myself down on the trunk of a withered tree, and saw two old women creeping along over the hard ground with slow and painful steps, bent double beneath a load of faggots, the miserable comfort they were carrying home for their winter's fire-side.

Most strange recollection! From this very place where I was sitting, and at this same hour, I remembered seeing, a long time ago, on a beautiful evening in the loving month of May, a group of girls who skipt before me, laughing and dancing, the very personifications of youth and happiness. I was only sixteen then, and the tree on whose dead trunk I was now reposing, was at that period in full vigour and budding promise.

My head lowered with this recollection, and my thoughts rushed rapidly through the long interval which had elapsed between that joyful evening in May and this chilly night of October. I fell into a deep reverie of my past life, and closed my eyes lest they should fall upon the contemplation of my own melancholy self.

When I arose, I saw, a few steps in front of me, a pale figure, who was gazing intently on me with an air of profound sorrow. She was so changed that I hesitated again and again, as though wishing to deceive myself that it could not be the Fairy I had seen before. There was no longer shining around her that luminous atmosphere which enveloped her, as with a garment of angelic light, on the occasion of her first apparition. Her robe was soiled and in rags, and partially disclosed her shoulders all torn and bleeding. Her feet were bandaged, and her long thin arms hung, devoid of life, by the side of her emaciated body. The heavenly blue of her eyes was veiled by the black clouds of sorrow that hung over them, whilst down her livid cheeks ran deep furrows, in which I almost fancied I could still see the tears. She held herself upright with pain, and, like a withered lily on a broken stem, was drooping to the earth, as though longing to hide in its bosom all her woes for ever.

"What dost thou wish of me?" I asked in a faint and faltering voice.

"My good friend"—and she spoke in sickly gasps—"the hour has arrived when we must separate. Before leaving thee for ever, I wished to bid thee an eternal farewell."

"Leave me! Leave me!" I shrieked out in despair. "Leave me before I curse thee. I ask thee, thou wicked Fairy, from whose mouth nought but toads and serpents have ever dropt, what hast thou done for me? Where are they all, those magnificent things thou didst promise me? I have looked for them in vain upon my journey through life. Where are those treasures thou didst promise to lavish upon my path? Instead of wealth, I have met with nought but poverty. Where is the crown you were to place upon my brow? What has become of the carriage that was to waft me up to heaven? The only crown I have had has been a crown of thorns; and the only servants and dependants that have waited on me have been solitude and despair! Thou talkest of separation; but unless thou beest the Genius of Sorrow, what has there ever been in common between us? If it be true that thou hast followed me everywhere, and that everywhere I have felt thy influence, then I have but little to thank thee, either for thy company or patronage, and the sooner thou dost leave me, the better. Leave me, I say—leave me—thou accurst one—leave me for ever, for thou must indeed be the Spirit of Evil!"

"I am neither the Genius of Sorrow, nor the Spirit of Evil," she replied, in a tone of deep despondency, "but it has ever been the destiny of man not to know me until he has lost me, ever his fate not to appreciate the value of my favours until he can no longer enjoy them. Friend, thou hast been ungrateful, like thy other brothers. Thou dost curse me, and I do not blame thee. In one brief moment, thou wilt know me, and then thou wilt wish, at the sacrifice of the many years still in store for thee, to see me once again such as you saw me for the first time. Thou dost ask with indignation what has become of all the riches I did prodigally promise thee? I have fulfilled all my promises; but thou didst disdain all the priceless treasures I lavished on thee with an untiring hand. For a carriage, I gave thee a young heart, that, fleeter than any steed, could have carried thee, if thou hadst wished it, beyond the limits of this earth. For servants, I gave thee Love and Faith, Hope and Imagination—but instead of retaining them as thy servants, thou didst allow them to become thy masters. Thy poverty, I endowed it with so much gaiety and happiness that many a despot, many a voluptuary would willingly have exchanged for it all their palaces, all their wealth. Thy solitude, I turned it into an enchanted land, which I peopled with fairy dreams. Thy melancholy, I have made thee love it with a poet's fondness, and thou hast wept tears of love over it, so much so that henceforth thy greatest misery will be not to know what the luxury is to weep. I followed thee everywhere, and everywhere thou didst meet with kindness and welcome smiles. Thanks to my guidance, thy path was the path of happiness, with nought but friendly hearts to greet thee at every step. With me at thy side, Heaven seemed brighter to thy gaze, and as I led thee onward, flowers appeared to grow under thy feet. And thou, answer me, what use hast thou made of the gifts of my fond munificence? what single one hast thou kept of all my treasures? What now remains to thee out of the endless pleasures I have flung across thy existence? If thou hast preserved nothing—if thou hast lost, squandered, gambled everything away—is it me thou shouldst reproach? If thou hast not known how to enjoy anything, am I the person thou shouldst accuse?"

So saying, a brilliant light shone around her, and illuminated for awhile her haggard person. A thick film seemed to fall from my eyes, and turning inwardly into my heart, I saw there, in all its blackness, the folly I had been guilty of.

"Stop! stop! Oh, do not leave me!" I shrieked, in a supplicating voice. "Give me back all the gifts I have despised! Give me back both Love and Hope! Do not deprive me of all Faith, of all Imagination. Let me enjoy them but one hour; let me know once more what it is to believe, what it is to love, if only for one minute, and, dying the next, I will bless thee, Fairy, whoever thou may'st be, with all my heart."

"Alas!" she cried, "you will live, but I am dying. And it is doubtful which of us has most reason to sorrow—you living, or I dying. Cannot you see my moments on this bright earth are numbered? Look at me—look in my face—see how I have suffered! Am I not the grim shadow of my former self? No wonder you shrink from me! For a long time I have been pining, been slowly withering away. A want of energy has poisoned latterly all my days. A feeling of listlessness has long deprived me of the pleasure of exercise. I move but with pain. My limbs are stiff and heavy, and my heart, that once did bound with the slightest emotion, now hangs heavy, like a lump of lead. Feel my hands, formerly so soft, they now have the dampness of death upon them. I am dying—and yet, if thou had'st only willed it. I should still have before me many long days. Thou hast been cruel to me, and hast killed me before my time. I have exhausted all my strength, have worn out my feet, in following thee. In vain I cried out for pity. You pushed me onwards, faster than I could go, and I was fain compelled to follow. I ran, limped, halted, fell down from fatigue, but rose and ran again, precisely as you bade me do. Winter or summer it was all the same. I was always at thy service; and often hast thou kept me out all night, in the cold and rain, when my weak state demanded both care and rest. In vain did I appeal, in vain did I call upon thee to tarry, to slacken the ardour of thy pursuits! Thou wert always deaf to my entreaties. In vain did I point out to thy notice, away from the dust and turmoil of the public road, some quiet retired spot where happiness was waiting for thee—thou didst only hurry me on to the nearest town, and force me, tired as I was, to take share with thee in its feverish excitements. The trial has been too much for me. I have shared all thy griefs and pains, all thy aches and troubles. There is not a morning care thou hast spared me—there has not been a midnight dissipation but what I have been dragged into it, with pale cheeks and crimson brow, and compelled to divide it with thee. How often have I dropt down with shame and exhausted, and resolved, as much from disgust as incapacity, for ever to abandon thee. But, ungrateful one, in spite of all thy cruelty, I loved thee, and one day's respite and kind indulgence were always sufficient to induce me to return to thee. But now, my hour has come. Friend of my heart, whom I have so faithfully followed, and whom now I leave only with my life, pity me and love me. I know thou wilt when I am gone. Open thy arms—I am dying, dear one—and press me lovingly to thy breast. It was in thy heart that I received my life; it is on thy heart that I wish now to meet my death."

"Thou must not die—thou shalt not!" I screamed with dying despair, as I opened my arms to receive her drooping frame; "but tell me, strange being, tell me before it is too late—speak, if for the last time.—and tell me who thou art?"

"I no longer am," she slowly uttered, "but I once was—once was THY YOUTH!"

Upon hearing these words, I wished to seize her and hold her in my arms for ever, but she had already disappeared, and in her place there lay on the ground, with the dust, nothing but a few withered flowers that had fallen out of her hair. Not one of them had retained the smallest perfume!

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TRIALS OF AN ENGLISH HOUSEKEEPER.: NO. III.--MRS. BURGESS'S WONDERFUL CAT.
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TRIALS OF AN ENGLISH HOUSEKEEPER.

NO. III.—MRS. BURGESS'S WONDERFUL CAT.

"Oh, Mary, dear Mary, how lonely and drear
The scenes now ungraced by thy presence appear!
Each hall in my dwelling I fondly explore,
And list for thy footstep, but hear it no more.
Oh, Mary, dear Mary!"
"DEAR MARY."

No sooner had Edward packed Mary out of the house, than I suddenly found myself thrown into as nice a mess as any lady could well be in. Twist it and turn it which way I would, the blacker it appeared, and I positively thought that I must have sunk under it. But really my husband is so hasty (though I say it, who should not perhaps), that he will never look before he leaps; and the consequence is, that he is invariably plunging himself headlong into all kinds of pickles. Indeed, my own dear Edward, having no more control over his passions than "a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour," of course could not keep his tongue between his teeth, but must go flying at our Mary before the proper time came for getting rid of the girl. And, dear me! if one has not got strength of mind enough to put up with the faults of other people for a day or two, I should like to know how, in the name of goodness gracious, we can ever hope that men will wink when we walk

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out of the right path ourselves—or, if we are so hard upon other persons, how can we expect that they will bear less heavily on us when they sit in judgment upon us. Though, for myself, I must say that I have always made it a rule to let the poisoned arrows of calumny go in at one ear and come out of the other.

I'm sure, if Edward had only looked at poor Mary's love of tippling with a proper spirit, he would have seen that it was not so much for a body to stomach after all, and that perhaps the love of drink, bad as it is, is but a trifling vice as compared with the love of tobacco—to which my husband, I regret to say, is a martyr. And such being the case, Edward ought to have remembered that those who ride about in glass coaches should not throw stones; for, of all habits, I must confess that smoking, in my eyes, is the most dreadful, and that, if I was called upon to choose whether I would sooner be addicted to liquor or tobacco, I really think I should be inclined to take to drinking in preference.

Not that I was insensible to the wickedness of our Mary's ways, but still I do think that my husband might have looked with more Christian charity upon the poor thing's infirmity, until my other servant was ready to come into the house, and then he might have bundled the creature into the street, as she deserved indeed. For in her absence I was so terribly put to it that really I should have blushed if anybody could have seen me making the shifts I did.

Dear mother, however, promised not to desert me in my trouble, and undertook to procure me a woman who would work for me by the day, until a servant whom I had engaged was ready to come to me. Mrs. Burgess was the name of the one whom my mother recommended, and she said that I should find her of great use and comfort to me, as she was a married woman, though she had been deserted by her husband, poor thing! who had run away like a brute, leaving her with a fine family of ten young children on her hands; that she was a good, hard-working, industrious, stout-made woman; and that the poor babes had nothing but the sweat of their mother's brow to subsist upon; and that it was only by working out, and doing a little washing at home, that the poor creature was enabled to keep her head above the water.

Mrs. Burgess came very early the next morning, and on going down into the kitchen to order dinner, she struck me as being really a very superior sort of body; and I thought that she was one of the best disposed and most honest of women, until I found her to be quite the contrary; for at first I really felt interested in the poor thing, on account of her being the mother of such a large family, and all by herself without a husband. I was quite pleased to hear the good woman go on as she did all that day, continually telling me that servants were such a bad lot, and that nothing was good enough for them, and how little gentlemen thought of what we poor women had to undergo for their sakes.

And she likewise told me the whole history of how shamefully Mr. Burgess, who drove a cab, had behaved towards her—never treating her as he ought to have done—though she had always been a good wife to him, and had seldom or never flown in his face—that her life had been one continued struggle with him from morning to night, she might say, and that after the hard battles they had had together, his going to New Orleans under the disguise of coming back in a few weeks, she must say was a return that she never expected. Upon which I remarked that for Mr. Burgess to run away to America in the way he had done, certainly did appear to me to be going a little too far. And then she was so kind as to hope that Mr. Skinston would never treat me in the same way, although, as she very truly said, she was afraid that the men were all alike, and that they really were not fit to be trusted out of your sight for two days together.

I couldn't have left Mrs. Burgess more than five minutes, and was just going to put myself to rights a bit, when I heard a most tremendous scream in the kitchen, and on going down, found the poor woman was nearly fainting. She told me she had just seen a great rat, as big as a Shetland pony, scamper across the scullery. This, of course, put me all of a twitter, and made my blood run quite cold down my back, for I didn't know that there was a rat in the place; and, as Mrs. Burgess observed, with great truth, but bad grammar, "we hadn't never so much as a cat in the house, and that if I didn't keep my eyes about me, I should find myself swarming with vermin before I knew where I was."

Then she was kind enough to tell me that she had got a beautiful Tom cat home, which I was perfectly welcome to if I liked; for that, though she loved the animal as much as if it were her own flesh and blood, still dear mother had been such a true friend to her, that she really couldn't think of keeping the cat from me; especially, as she said, Tom was such a capital mouser, that he'd soon clear the place, and besides he was so tame, and had been so well brought up, that he was more like a Christian

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than a dumb animal; for I should find that he *would take anything from me* (and so I did, with a vengeance; though I really believe now that the cat had no finger in it after all; but that that smoothfaced old Mrs. Burgess had only brought the animal into our establishment for the worst of purposes—and what 's more, that the tale she told me about the rat was all a story, and made up just to get her Tom into the house, so that she might use the cat as a cloak for her own shameful practices).

After Mrs. Burgess had taken the milk that afternoon, the poor woman—who appeared very fond of me—would run round and fetch her fine Tom; and when she brought him, I do think he was the prettiest pet I ever saw. He was so black, that really his coat was for all the world like your hat; and the dear had got three such beautiful white stockings on his feet, and as fine a frill round his neck as I ever beheld in all my life. Nor can I omit to mention Tom's sweet pretty whiskers, which stood out on each side of his face just like two shaving-brushes; so that, indeed, taking the animal altogether, I really don't think I ever saw so fine a cat. I declare he was quite a duck.

When I went down stairs the next morning to see about dinner, Mrs. Burgess told me that she couldn't think what on earth could have come to the remainder of the leg of mutton that we had had for dinner the day before, for it was not to be found anywhere, and she really believed that rogue of a cat must have walked off with our leg in the night; adding, that she regretted to say he had been a dreadful thief ever since he was a kitten.

But I told her that it couldn't be the cat, because he had left no bone behind him, though I had no opinion of his honesty, for the night before he had made away with every drop of milk in the house, and a whole half pound of butter. Still, as she very wisely observed, most likely he had buried the bone in the garden or somewhere about the house; and so it turned out, for Mrs. Burgess brought me the bone the very next day, picked as clean as if a Christian had done it, and which she said she had found in the coal-cellar early that morning.

When Edward found it all out, of course he flew into a passion as usual, and went on in such a way that I was obliged to tell him, even though he was my husband, that he was no man; and he vowed that the animal shouldn't pass another night under his roof, and that Mother Burgess (as he would call her) should take the brute and drown it that very night. Then he had her up and told her as much; and the poor woman, with tears in her eyes, consented to do so; for, as she very truly said, it was so dreadful to have a thief in the house, that if Tom wasn't made away with, she was afraid we might get to suspect *her*—and that after what we had lost, much as it might go against her, she would do as Mr. Skinston desired, and see the creature safe at the bottom of the Regent's canal before she went to bed that night.

When I went down to let the woman in the next morning, I was never so surprised in all my life as to find her fondling the cat, whom she said she had found on the door-step with the very brick-bat tied to his neck which she told me she had put on before throwing him into the water over night—though how on earth he could ever have managed to get out of the canal alive and crawl back to our house with that great thing round his neck, is more than I 've ever been able to comprehend.

Mrs. Burgess agreed with me that it was perfectly wonderful; adding, that after all she had put upon him, the poor creature's life certainly must have been spared by some superior power for some hidden purpose; so she begged of me, in a most touching manner, to try poor Tom for a few days more, as perhaps it would be a lesson to him, and he would go on better for the future. I really hadn't the heart to refuse, though I determined to keep it a secret from Edward, for I knew that he wouldn't rest easy in his bed until he had killed the poor animal.

So I kept Mrs. Burgess's Tom unknown to my husband until it was impossible to keep him any longer, for really the things that creature would do, and the articles he would steal, no one would credit. It seemed to be more like the work of a Christian than a dumb animal. If we had a fowl for dinner, and I missed it in the morning, the cat was sure to have taken it; if the tarts disappeared, the cat had eaten them; if the flour ran short, the cat had upset it; if I missed a silver spoon, the cat must have hidden it; if any of the crockery or glass was broken, the cat had knocked them down; if the cask of table ale was empty long before its time, why the cat had pulled out the spigot. In fact, nothing was missed that the cat didn't take, and nothing was broken that the cat didn't break.

And so things went on until just before my new servant came in, when all of a sudden I missed a whole pound packet of Orange Pekoe Tea, which Edward had brought home from the city on purpose for me. This Mrs. Burgess assured me Tom must have taken for the mere

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sake of taking; for she herself had seen him scampering about the house like a mad thing with a bit of paper in his mouth, and which she had no doubt now was what the tea had been done up in; adding that it really was quite a mercy that it hadn't been a five-pound note, as, of course, it would have been all the same to a creature so dishonest as he was.

When I told Edward all about it, he called me a fool for my pains, and said he could see that the cat was too good a friend to my old charwoman for her to wish to get rid of him. As for Tom's stealing the tea, it was all a pack of fiddlesticks, and he verily believed that he had never been into the canal at all, and that some fine day I should find old Mother Burgess at the bottom of it. However, he said he would soon put a stop to that game, for he would lock the cat up in the back attic that night, and take it with him to office in his blue bag in the morning; and when he got it down there we should soon find out who was the thief. I told him it was a very good plan, if he would only keep it a secret from Mrs. Burgess, and take care not to go letting the cat out of the bag before he started.

Accordingly, I took that naughty Tom up stairs with us when we went to bed, and locked him up in the back attic, safe away from the larder. But not a wink of sleep could we get, for the creature kept on scratching and mee-yowing for more than two hours, and then we were nearly driven out of our wits, by hearing a tremendous crash, which Edward said was the cat flying at the windows, which would all be broken before I could say the name of Mr. John Robinson, as the creature was clearly going wild. So, though I was all of a tremble, and couldn't keep the candle steady for fright, I went up stairs to see what I could do to quiet him. The very moment I opened the door, he flew at me, for all the world as if he had been a young tiger, and dug his claws (which, I can assure my readers, were just like so many darning needles) so deep into me, that I gave a loud scream, and, letting the night-candlestick fall, I flew down stairs in the dark, with the brute clinging fast to my night-dress. When I got to our room, the dragon let go his hold, and ran under our bed, where he stopped, spitting and growling away like anything, and with his eyes like two balls of phosphorus, and his tail as large as a Bologna sausage, or my sable boa. Edward took the poker, and I got a broom, and we kept poking and sh—sh—sh—sh—ewing away as hard as we could, for near upon half an hour, expecting every moment that he would spring out upon us again; in fear of which, I kept as close as possible behind dear Edward, who, I must say, displayed more courage, under the circumstances, than I ever gave him credit for, and behaved like another Grace Darling in a moment of such imminent peril. Nor was it until he had thrown a whole jugful of water at the cat, that the savage brute shot out of the room, and rushed down stairs.

The next morning, I was telling my husband what a nice little boy that was of Mrs. Burgess's, and how fond he seemed to be of his mother, for he always came to see her every day just before my usual time of going down stairs to see about dinner, when Edward said that he saw what cat took the meat now; so he'd just take old Mother Burgess unawares, and very soon show me whether our Tom was the thief or not. So when we went down to breakfast, dear Edward sent Mrs. Burgess out to get a pint of milk for him, and as soon as she had left the house he slipt down stairs, and brought me up the basket that she came with upon her arm every morning, and which, he said, he had discovered stowed away in our copper in the back kitchen. Inside the basket we found nearly the whole of the beautiful beef-steak pie that we had scarcely touched for dinner the day before, and a bottle of pickles that had only been used once, and a bar of yellow soap, and a bag of flour, and two eggs, wrapt up in one of our best glass cloths. Then, putting them all back again, Edward hid the basket in the plate-warmer, under our side-board; and when the woman came in with the milk, he told her that if she would be so good as to bring up the cold beef-steak pie and the pickles, he thought he could take a mouth-ful of it (no one but a man would ever have thought of such a thing). Without saying a word, down goes the brazen-faced creature, and up she comes with the dish in her hands, and scarcely a bit of the pie left in it.

"Oh, mum," she cries, without even so much as the shadow of a blush on her face, "only do just look here, mum! If that thief of a Tom hasn't been and devoured all this beautiful pie of yours, and he must have knocked down the pickles, for there was ever so much broken glass on the floor when I came in this morning. Oh, mum! really it is too bad. Upon my word, that cat is so cunning that I really shouldn't wonder at anything he did next."

On which, Edward very cleverly asked her whether she would wonder if the next thing Tom did was to put a whole beefsteak pie into her own basket, together with some pickles,

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and some soap, and flour, and a glass cloth, and an egg or two, just to send home as a treat to his old friends, her children. Then, taking out the basket, he told her to look at it, adding that he himself "did not wonder now at anything the cat had done since she had so kindly brought him to our house, and that really she ought to take care of the animal, for it was clear that it was as good as a fortune to her, and she could never want so long as she could get a situation for her cat in the same family as herself."

Whereupon the woman put her apron up to her eyes and pretended to cry, saying that she was a poor lone woman, with ten children, and it was a hard matter to find bread for so many mouths (as if that was any affair of ours). So Edward gave her the basket with all our things in it, like a stupid, and packed her out of the house, saying that, if she did not keep a sharp look-out, she would find, some fine morning, that, like her cat, she was not born to be drowned.

I was not sorry that we got rid of Mrs. Burgess on the spot, as my new servant, Norah Connor, was coming in the evening, but all the day I couldn't get over the idea of Edward (a lawyer, too!) being silly enough to let the deceitful creature go off with one of our best glass cloths.

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THE FURNISHED HOUSE.: TWO CHAPTERS FROM AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY. CHAPTER I.
Neal, Alice B
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Nov 1855; 51, American Periodicals
pg. 428

THE FURNISHED HOUSE.

TWO CHAPTERS FROM AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

BY ALICE B. NEAL.

CHAPTER I.

Then, breaking into tears, "Dear God!" she cried, "and must we see
All blissful things depart from *us*, or ere we go to *thee?*
We cannot guess thee in the wood, or feel thee in the wind!
Our cedars must fall round us ere we see the light behind!
Ay, sooth, we feel too strong in weal to weed thee on that road!
But, woe being come, the soul is dumb that crieth not on 'God.'"
MRS. BROWNING.

I DO not remember my mother; I was so young when she died that I cannot be said to have "lost" that which I was never conscious of possessing. As far as care and tender thoughtfulness can go, her place was fully supplied in my eldest sister, Rachel; my only sister—my only relative, indeed—for I should have told you that it was my father's death, when I was but a fortnight old, which gave my mother the shock from which she never recovered. So, you see that I lay in my very cradle with the shadow of grief and loneliness above me.

But there was the presence of an angel to brighten all things, though the shadow never quite passed away, only grew transparent and mistlike as I came to recognize the goodness and purity of my sister in every act and word of her life; she was never merry, but always cheerful and contented. She never laughed aloud, and I can remember far back in her girlhood; but I never sought her eyes without finding that calm, bright smile that I did not see elsewhere. I have come to know its meaning now; it was the token of a spirit at peace with itself, and trustful as a child towards our Father in Heaven.

He cared for us as he has promised to care for the fatherless. We never had abundance; but we never knew absolute want. All came to *me* through my ministering angel. There was a time when she stood to me in His place, when I looked no further for happiness—for example, for light, knowledge, daily bread—so it came; that what I would not see in wilful blindness He taught me.

Others could see Rachel's goodness, and purity, and tender, loving kindness as well as her child; that was what she always called me, and I knew myself as such always in thought. She was sought in marriage, and she became a wife; that was my first real trouble. I believe now it was jealousy, that bitter, and at times fierce feeling, with which I at first looked upon this change. She had belonged to me, to me only, so many years; and I had no one else to love. I had never made friends and companions of my own age, as other children do; she was enough to fill my heart.

Many would have thought it a fortunate change for me; every one who troubled themselves about me at all probably did. Our single room, which had been "home" so many years, was exchanged for a neat and tastefully furnished house in a new, bright quarter of the city, where there were squares and shade-trees, and a glimpse of the river from an upper room. We were no longer obliged to steal our moments for recreation from the endless toil of the needle; and I can yet recollect the thrill of satisfaction with which I shut myself in that upper room (it was but partly furnished and unwashed then) with a book, and the recollection that I might stay there until it was finished if I chose, or, when hurrying through the square, with its bits of velvet lawn and cool, fragrant paths, I remembered that no task-work awaited me, and I was free to loiter in the shadow or in the sun.

My new brother was very kind and indulgent to us both; but I did not think he loved Rachel as he should have done. It was such a quiet, undemonstrative affection; at least, it seemed so to me when *I knew* that there was no one like her in the whole wide world! He was kind to me, as belonging to her, not for myself; that I always felt. I did not care for that, though. I knew, as well as he did, or the new friends that now claimed a share in my treasure, that I was unlovely, that all the beauty with which she might invest me was in her loving eyes. I knew I was dark, and plain, and shy—though that is scarcely the word. I felt indifferent, as I here told you, even to this kind brother, to all save Rachel.

So, we lived three, four years; and I was a woman, retaining all the peculiarities of the child. I had read, read incessantly; but of the

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forms of education I know nothing. I had not a single accomplishment, except that I could barely accompany myself in a few simple ballads. I understood Rachel better now; the interest and love which she withheld from casual acquaintances, and those who sought to come nearer, for her husband and myself, and the humble watchfulness which had ever kept her "unspotted from the world."

Then came a second blow; still I had not learned the lesson. A new love rose up between us, stronger, if possible, than the first, and far more absorbing. There had been but one thing wanting to make that tranquil home-life perfect to them; I wanted nothing, nothing—oh, my Father, not even thee!

I had learned in time to accustom myself to share my sister's love; to see her eyes brighten when evening came, and the book or work was laid away to watch for him; to see her sit beside him, her hand laid in his; to go quietly away, and leave them alone together, knowing that, when the morning came, and the business of the day called him away, *my* claim was the same as in those dear old times; but now, when I stood in the darkened room, pale and silent, with the anxiety and the cruel fear I had endured alone, and saw her lying there, so fair, so helpless, looking up to him with a new tenderness, for the sake of the feeble, wailing infant he held so unskilfully, yet so proudly, I felt the old fierceness rise up again, ten times stronger, until it became almost a death hatred of the two, father and child. I was forgotten, *forgotten*, when I had suffered so much! He had been calm through all; and now that frail, puny creature was to absorb all that he had graciously left me heretofore!

I have always been called gentle. I believe I am so naturally; but then I set my teeth (I confess it in helpless humility now), and prayed for that child to die! Yes, I was a murderess at heart! I, who had never known anything but love and kindness from either of them, prayed that the full cup held to their lips might be dashed away before they had tasted it.

Perhaps I was *mad* at the moment; it may be that the torture of agonizing anxiety, the sudden revulsion when they told me Rachel would live, had turned my brain. I have hoped so since, that it might not be imputed to me as sin; yet sin it was, even though not of that dye. I had sinned all my life long in my idolatry!

After awhile, she saw me. Perhaps she read some suffering in my face; but she signed me to come near, and stoop down, that she might kiss my lips. She did not think of herself even then, for I caught the words "poor sister!" in the parting whisper of exhaustion.

She took one of those little, wandering hands (the child was lying beside her then), and feebly guided it to my cheek as I knelt down by the bed; I shrank one instant from the touch, and then I accepted all her meaning, and all—all that I could then foresee of my future life. I put away the taunting, treacherous temptation; and the second prayer of my life was for forgiveness of the first.

Yet for months the fear that the first, not the last, was heard, clouded all the joy I came to feel in my boy's babyhood. Rachel always spoke of him as *our* child, and consulted me in everything pertaining to him. Perhaps she guessed a part of the truth, and wished to make me feel that I had no diminution of her love to fear; that was not a part of my punishment.

The upper room was furnished now, and she made it her nursery; here we passed the morning always, her work-table drawn to the window, for that one glimpse of the river, seen over the sea of roofs, and the waving of the trees in the green park beyond. I can see her, as plainly as if I had just left her there, sitting in the shadow of the muslin curtain, paler, though scarcely older than when she was *my sister Rachel*, pausing from the tiny ruffle, or the long, flowing robe, to look with such unutterable mother-love into the large, grave eyes of the child, lying on my knee, or rising to temper the sunshine or the fresh air to the little sleeper in his cradle.

It is not true that love is blinded to the slow approach of disease; I saw it first. I saw it before the husband, secure in his longed-for happiness; before the physician, who came often to see the child; before the friends, who agreed that "Mrs. Morton looked delicate, really very delicate, since the birth of her infant." I knew it; but I would not confess to myself what I knew, and what she herself began to feel rather than understand.

It was a gradual, silent fading; death could have no harsher message to one whose life had been so pure and lovely. She lived to teach her child his earliest prayers, to hear from her sick-room the patter of little feet going about the house, the musical murmured call with which he sought her vainly in accustomed places. I never left her; even the child, who had come to be a part of her, could not entice me away. She did not exact a promise in his behalf; she never seemed to doubt the future, or my own, placed in her husband's hands.

It was all over at last; the shutters were closed, the rooms made very straight and formal;

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strangers went about with a mockery of stillness that was harder for me to bear than mirth would have been, as I sat with my boy in the upper room, pierced to the heart by his unconscious prattle of "mamma." Poor, poor child! When that mother, who would have been so much to his childhood, and who knew, better than I, my Rachel—my all—was lying, with softly closed eyes and folded hands, dumb to his sweet pleading, dumb to my passionate lamentation, and to the silent kisses that her husband pressed, with quivering lips, upon her white, gleaming forehead, set forever with the signet of peace.

I saw then, even in the selfishness of my own sorrow, how I had avenged him, how much he must have loved her always, how the struggle to resign what was so dear to him had worn upon him. There were lines of suffering about his mouth, veining his hollow temples. He stooped as if he had suddenly grown old as he went about the house; and his hand trembled as he caressed her child, lying in his breast.

My grief, like my love, though selfish, was calculating. I did not once think of my future, except of the void that her absence would ever make. It came like a flash upon me that this could no longer be my home, and that I had no other dependence.

There are different ways of cherishing the dead. I would have tokens of them always in my sight, their memory be familiar as a household word. There was not a chair in which she was accustomed to sit, not a book that she had delighted in, but had a double dearness to me now. It was different with my sister's husband; he would bury his dead out of his sight. He could not lie where everything reminded him continually of his loss; besides that, his health, never strong, was unsettled by his sorrow, and he had accepted the advice of his physician—"a sea voyage"—the forlorn hope of the consumptive, before he spoke to me.

"We could not go on living here together in any case," he said. (I knew so little of the world that I wondered why.) "And if I return, this would not be the place for me, this home that she arranged, these rooms, 'furnished with reference only to her choice.'"

And yet he was willing to give them up to the desecration of strangers. If *I* had been their possessor, and unable to bear the sight of them, I would have bolted the doors, and let them crumble to dust before such unhallowed touch and tread should have profaned them; but then

> "Such things be, and will again;
> Women cannot judge for men!"

I had no right even to speak against his decision. I submitted because I was helpless; he arranged it all. I was to go to his brother's in his absence, who was made the guardian of his child; and when he returned—"Ah," he said, "it would be time enough to decide then!"

I was to be with *her* child, to have him all as my own; and I acquiesced in this double dependence. Mrs. John Morton and her daughters were the least of my likings. Our previous homeliness of living, our "poverty" they choose to call it, had barbed many a shaft, which Rachel's gentle nature had made powerless, but, passing her, rankled in my recollection. Mr. John Morton was an older and richer man than his brother. He was cold and self-absorbed, his wife worldly and ambitious, his daughters—well, I had always avoided them; but there was no help for it now. I could not leave my darling, Rachel's child, alone among them.

The house was "for sale, furnished;" so said numberless advertisements, which I hunted out of the morning papers to try and force myself into familiarity with the fact. I hate this modern fashion of a transfer of penates, this selling associations and remembrances beyond all price! this taking up the thread of another destiny to weave with one's inner life, unconscious griefs and longings, pains and pleasures. I wonder that phantoms do not dispute the possession, and ghosts of loves and hatreds that have been born and died there, surrounded by their silent witnesses, do not haunt and vex the rash intruder!

No one can dream what I suffered. Those rooms still shadowed by her presence, the cradle in which she had rocked her child, the very drawers that held her wardrobe, the very bed on which she died, all so sacred to me that I passed the doors with a suffocating gasp, all thrown open to the mocking sunshine, the careless eyes, the criticism, the depreciation of idle, vulgar curiosity! It was cruel to leave the task to me!

I learned my lesson by rote, and repeated it mechanically: "This is the parlor, ladies; you will see that the carpets are almost new. The pictures do not go with the house (her portrait had hung among them). The dining-room is on the same floor; Mr. Morton keeps his silver. Would you like to go up stairs?" Oh, how I hated those curious, cautious eyes that peered everywhere, searching for defects, and spying out deficiencies we had never dreamed of! But then it was our home; to them only a "furnished house for sale!"

One day, when I had been goaded beyond endurance by this depreciation, which was *their*

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part, I turned suddenly, like a stag at bay, and raised my eyes, full and flashing, into the speaker's face. She was a young, thoughtless, fashionably dressed woman; and she had expected and desired a more elegant establishment. Generally, I went my round, and scarcely knew, when I had closed the door upon them, whether they were young or old, gentle or simple; but I saw this party distinctly. And when I said, in answer to some careless slur upon the room and its appointments: "Hush! this was my sister's nursery!" I could have stamped my foot at them, and closed the door upon them all if I had dared. The gentleman said: "For shame, Florence!" at the same moment. Perhaps he saw the blood mounting to my forehead, that they were stirring the depths beneath. I saw him glance at my deep mourning-dress, and then at his sister; and I thanked him with a look, as if I had always known him, for the first thoughtful deference that any one of them had ever extended to me.

They took the home after all; I heard it more calmly than I once could have thought. I was thankful that my task was over, that the bitter parting, this second parting with my sister, was at hand; they were to come in three days' time. Mr. Morton had sailed; and I was to have all things in readiness for them.

Imagine those three days of gloomy preparation, laying her books, her work, her wardrobe carefully aside, the dressing-gown, the embroidered slippers, shaped to her delicate feet, the handkerchiefs she had pressed to her lips so often to still the secret pain, the lawn caps, whose lace borders had pressed her wasted cheeks through restless days and nights! I had all my agony, all my loss over again and again.

Mr. John Morton particularly requested that I would not leave the house to the woman in attendance. Something might be forgotten or omitted that had been promised to the newcomers; and Mr. Morton, who had closed the sale, was particular even to a fraction where his word was passed.

"The gentleman particularly requested that he might find the house in perfect order, Miss Lawrence; and you will oblige me by seeing that it is so. I will send a carriage for you and the trunks in the afternoon; there is no necessity for the boy to come before then."

I understood her perfectly well, as she stood in the hall, saying this slowly. She meant: "You are to be under my orders, and you might as well understand it first as last."

"As for the boy, he will be in my way, at any rate. I will not be plagued with him before it is necessary."

She was a fair, fine-looking person, dressed in the deepest and most expensive mourning for the wife of her brother-in-law. Mourning was fashionable and becoming; her daughters, who were blondes, wore it also, but *lightened* by costly lace and flowers, as if nature even needed or brought forth the dreariness of black foliage and blossoms! and an endless, irritating profusion of bugles and pendants that glistened as they went out upon the pavement. I hated them more than ever for the mockery, and felt for an instant that I could throw off my own close, sombre garments, and choose the brightest, gayest colors, to shame them for assuming the livery of a grief they could not feel.

I did more than was expected of me. I took the fragrant linen from the drawers—I had helped my sister set every stitch in the broad hems, and smooth delicate seams—oh! how could he part with them?—and made the bed, smooth and fair, for those that were to enter in to her labors. Even my boy's cradle—he had outgrown it now—was prepared for other dimpled limbs to rest upon. Her husband, wrapped in his own sorrow, and naturally unobservant of the "trifles that make the sum of human things," had not thought to offer me even my sister's work-table, and I could not ask for what I felt to be my right. I left it standing open beside the window; I took a piece of unfinished work, and laid down upon it, torturing myself with the home look that the whole room presented when I turned to leave it for the last time. I saw that the fires were replenished, that the hearths were swept clean. I laid the cheerful round table with my own hands, with bright china and clear sparkling glass; that table alone was a welcome to the new household.

It pleased me to do all this, but I did not do it to give *them* pleasure; it was the refinement of all I was suffering. I crowned my own loneliness in imagining their cheerful ingathering that night; the laughter and the jests of their first essay at "being a family," that gay child-wife in my Rachel's seat, her merry romping child cradled on my boy's pillow!

When all was done, I shut myself up with him in my sister's room, to await Mrs. Morton's summons. I was worn with unusual bodily exertion, and my mind had been overstrained for months; this waiting chafed me. I did not wish to talk with myself yet, not till I had time to realize the change in its full extent. What I had done all day, had been partly in this spirit. I laid my close bonnet with its long black veil upon the bed, and drew the heavy folds of my shawl closer around me, as I shivered in the

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gloom and stillness that had settled down upon the house. Why did not Mrs. Morton send for me? Surely it was time, and Lawrence, weary of the delay and the restraint, begged to go down tairs again, but I shrank from the faintest possibility of encountering any one.

Though that was mere foolishness—of course, Mrs. Morton could send—she would not expose me to such a cruel alternative.

If I had known they were coming, I would not have hesitated; though it was already dark out of doors, I would have taken Lawrence by the hand, and gone out alone into the night and the storm; for a dreary autumn rain was beating against the windows. I heard the carriage stop, but I thought it had come for me; in another moment I heard steps, and the laughter and welcomes I had imagined echoing from below. I might have spared myself picturing these things; I was to see and hear them; hear the exclamations of those to whom everything was new, the opening and shutting of doors, in their explorations of this unknown land, the children bounding up the stairs, a heavier tread coming nearer and nearer, a hand on the very lock of the door, which was alone between me and them; while Lawrence listened, and wondered and questioned, until I was too frantic to trust myself to reply; and no way of escape was left for us.

I threw myself on the floor, and drew him down with me; I buried my head in my hands, on the pillow, where her dear head had lain.

They did not see, or distinguish me, in the mass of black shadows, at first, but my uncontrollable sobs, and the child's restless movements, betrayed us. There was a sudden pause in the laughter and exclamations, which told me this; then a voice said, almost sternly, "Come away! all of you," and I knew it was the grave husband of the gay young wife who had withdrawn them.

(Conclusion next month.)

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THE FURNISHED HOUSE.: TWO CHAPTERS FROM AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY. CHAPTER II.
Neal, Alice B
Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine (1854-1882); Dec 1855; 51, American Periodicals
pg. 520

THE FURNISHED HOUSE.

TWO CHAPTERS FROM AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

BY ALICE B. NEAL.

(Concluded from page 432.)

CHAPTER II.

"Until, in grieving for the worst,
We learn what is the best."

THE sounds stole up more faintly from below, while the child and I sobbed on in wretched contrast; then there came a low knock at the door, and I hurried on my bonnet that the veil might conceal my face before I opened it.

"There is a carriage waiting for you," the same deep, quiet voice said; and an arm was offered to lead me to it.

I felt the proffered kindness; and it was so grateful to me that I longed for words to thank this stranger aright. I laid my hand, trembling with excited feeling, upon it; and we slowly passed down those stairs. Funeral chords to the festal song of their welcome home were Lawrence and I, going forth forever.

I knew I was indebted to the same thoughtfulness that all the doors were closed, and that we encountered no one in the passages. No one had come from Mrs. Morton's to take charge of her expected guests, though, as I have said, the night was dark, and the rain pitiless. He shielded me as well as he could, this kind man, on whom I had no claim, while the rain beat down upon his uncovered head as he placed me in the carriage, and, hurrying up the steps again, brought Lawrence in his arms, and seated him beside me.

I blessed him unawares as he went back to the warmth and brightness of his own fireside, while the carriage rolled slowly on, and carried me away from my old life and my former self to the hard, reluctant charities of my new abode. "Home" it never could be in any sense; I felt it as the driver rang the bell, and only he helped me and my charge up the high stone steps, where I stood until it pleased the servant, whose office it was, to admit me into the warmly lighted vestibule. Mrs. Morton was surprised into something like interest in our arrival. She was standing in the hall, evidently vexed at some omission.

"Not gone yet?" I heard her say. "I told John this morning he was to send."

"But John is forgetful, you know as well as I do," said the slow, pompous voice of Mr. John Morton, in answer. "I am surprised that you should have been so neglectful."

"Here she is now!" said his wife, with a tone of relief, as, turning sharply to see who had entered, she encountered me. "How did you get here, Miss Lawrence?"

"The carriage was late," I could not help saying; "but it came at last."

"How is this?" asked Mrs. Morton of the retreating servant. "I thought you said John had not gone."

"He has not. I left him at his dinner just now."

"Are you sure it was *my* carriage, Miss Lawrence?"

I had not thought about it at all; I had taken it for granted, and not even offered to pay the coachman. He was gone; so some one must have made the arrangements with him.

"This is all very strange!" said Mr. Morton, turning to his wife again. "I give orders that are neglected; my ward and his—his *companion*," said Mr. Morton, stumbling upon the word, "arrive here in an unknown vehicle, evidently ordered by some other person; I don't understand it!" And, feeling himself personally aggrieved by the delinquency—I was left out of sight altogether—the master of the house rustled the evening paper indignantly, and walked back into the parlor again.

In the mean time, I stood, without a word of welcome, in my dripping clothing, eyed curiously by the servant, who still waited for further commands. Lawrence clung to my dress; and, recovering from her annoyance a little, his aunt essayed to take his hand. I felt a grim satisfaction when he turned from her—for she was almost a stranger to him—and clung to me closer than ever.

"He is tired and hungry," I said, instead of exerting my influence and authority to make him meet her advances.

"I suppose so," she answered, quite as coldly as I had spoken.

"Edward, call Bridget to show Miss Lawrence to her room, and put dinner on table again."

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She, too, turned as she spoke, and followed her husband, leaving me still standing, directly under the glare of the chandelier in the wide hall, alone with the servant. He understood at once "the poor relation" footing on which I was placed in the household. He did not offer to take the basket which I held, though it was large and heavy, and gave me another impertinent, scrutinizing stare before he went to summon the chambermaid. She had the kindest face of all when she came; and Lawrence, with that intuitive perception of character which so astonishes one in children, suffered her to take him, and carry him up the long flight of stairs to the room allotted to us. It was on the same floor with her own; I knew it must be, and she pointed her door out to the child as she passed it.

"It's Bridget's room, bless his darlin' little heart; and it's Bridget that'll come till him if he cries for her in the long avenings."

It was a front room though, looking out on the very park seen so distantly from our own home; large and low, but well furnished. It would have been cheerful if there had been a fire in the grate; but perhaps that was more of John's forgetfulness. I did not lay it much to heart.

No one came to us in the dining-room. The table was handsomely laid, and the dishes were as numerous and elegantly served as if we had been invited guests; but it was by no special courtesy. There could be no shabbiness in Mr. John Morton's household.

Edward, the waiter, began with condescending familiarity; but my manner and tone soon changed it into neglectful carelessness, the only weapon of resentment at his command. I helped Lawrence plentifully; it was his right. For myself, bread and water made my first meal of dependence; even that choked me.

Bridget was coaxing a flame to steal through the pile of wood and coal that encumbered the grate when we went back to our room. If the fire had been burning brightly, it would have been welcome; but these fruitless attempts annoyed me, and Lawrence was asleep upon my shoulder already. Bridget helped me to undress him; and, folding back the nicely made bed, he was laid upon the pillow in an unconscious sleep, which I envied. As for me, I sent the girl away, and, wrapping a shawl around me, sat down by the window to *think*.

It is the way with us too often in "this fair world of God's." We refuse proffered assistance and alleviations that are offered, and sit down in wilful darkness to gloom over the future, choosing its dreariest aspect to dwell upon; so I that night sat without light or fire when both were at my command, turned away from the sweet picture of Rachel's child in his innocent sleep to strain my eyes into the darkness without, and listen to the dreary beating of the storm, and liken these things to my own destiny. I recall that evening now to acknowledge that I did not deserve even the comforts I then cast behind me.

I might have been left to gain my daily bread for myself and the child by the labor which would now be almost impossible to me, I had lived so long at ease. I might have been forced to see him want for the very crumbs that fell from Mrs. Morton's table, wasting and pining from cold, hunger, and nakedness. *He*, and the treasure of consolation that was bound up in his life I did not then recognize—he might have been taken from me altogether, and with him the shadow of the claim I had upon human relationship and sympathies. I acknowledge this, moreover, that, if the punishment of my wilful rebellion had been this, it would have been just; but, "knowing my frailty, he remembered mercy." If Rachel had been placed thus instead of me, her life would have been one of cheerful endurance, if not positive happiness; but, as I said before, shafts that would have glanced harmlessly past her, entered and rankled in my heart.

My life at Mrs. Morton's gradually settled down into a dreary monotony, though their *mourning* did not prevent more gayety than I had ever seen before. Morning-calls, shopping, and visiting-expeditions, dinner, company, concert and opera going in abundance, filled up their week's round of amusement. Sundays were scarcely distinguished, except that breakfast was later, and their showy toilets were made for church instead of Broadway. Dinner was, if possible, a more abundant meal; and there were generally invited guests.

I lived apart from all this, though nothing of their frivolity escaped me; they knew this, and it angered them that the plainly dressed, silent girl, who avoided even a chance meeting in the hall, or drew back with a mocking humility upon the stairs, had sounded the shallow depths of their hearts and lives, and inwardly despised what she saw and heard of their friends and their pursuits; so, though I did not interfere with them in the least, and never willingly crossed their path or allowed Lawrence to do so, the passive dislike grew daily into more open and active enmity between us, and deeper, deeper still I felt the thrall of an unwilling bondage.

My routine was, as nearly as possible, this.

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I was the nurse and teacher of Lawrence in the morning; I met the family at meal times with my charge; if there was company, my mourning was a sufficient excuse for seclusion. Mrs. Morton saved me the trouble of a decision on this score; she often kindly provided for me in the same way.

It was the occasion of the first dinner-party after I had come to them. Mrs. Morton was in the store-room, giving out the dessert, as I passed by.

"Miss Lawrence, one minute, if you please."

And Miss Lawrence stood still as a statue, with neither interest nor curiosity on her features, to listen. She might have spared herself the hesitating manner.

"We are to have rather a large company to-day; and it occurred to me that you would not care to meet so many strangers just now, especially as Lawrence will always dine up stairs on these occasions."

I only bowed—for it was a *dumb*, evil spirit that possessed me—and turned away.

"Miss Lawrence, one moment more. I should like to have *my nephew* properly dressed, and sent down to dessert, if you have no objections."

These instructions sufficed to govern me forever after, not that I cared to join them, or would have done so had the choice been given me; but see for yourself how the *order*, though ever so cautiously worded, must have chafed me. I took Lawrence on my knee as I went up stairs again, and, brushing back his golden hair from his face, made him look straight into mine with his large, serious eyes.

"Lawrence," I said, "they do not want us here, my boy, but never mind; we have a right, and we will stay. Your father's relations have discovered that you are a pretty enough little puppet for them to display in their drawing-room; but you belong to your dead mother and to *me*. Do you hear, Lawrence?"

"Ay, mamma," he said, catching at the almost forgotten utterance.

I pressed his face in my two hands so closely that it must have hurt him; but he did not cry out, and still looked up wonderingly.

"They shall not take *you* away from me," I said, speaking again; "no one else in this wide world has the *least* claim upon you."

Alas, I did not know, in my vehemence, how nearly I had spoken the truth!

So it was that many a day I sat at my window to listen to the roll of carriages, to hear the bustle of arrivals, and of entertainment from below, light laughter, the hum of conversation, and bursts of music by snatches, and had sent my boy, looking—oh, so beautiful in his black velvet suit, and the flush and sparkle of expectation in his face!—down to them to be admired, and petted, and enticed away from me. I do not wonder that he loved me less; for I know my welcome and my kisses were cold to theirs when he ran up so eagerly, with hands full of bonbons, and eyes sparkling with excitement and the flatteries they had so lavishly showered upon him. I might have listened at least; but I always checked these recitals, half-pantomime, as the broken sentences failed him in his eagerness. This was the most intolerable drop of bitterness; but even that I could have counteracted in a degree if I had so chosen.

I had been under Mr. John Morton's roof five months, the dreariest part of my life, before I had ever entered the drawing-room. I remember the time so distinctly because a letter, the second, had been received from my brother-in-law, and discussed at the dinner-table. He did not gain in health as he had hoped, and had gone further than he had at first intended, to Madeira from Cuba. There were messages to his boy, and kind remembrances to me, read out in the slow, distinct utterance of Mr. John Morton, who laid the letter down, and his double eyeglass upon it, though I longed to see the sentence of a longer captivity for myself as I noticed the looks of annoyance exchanged between Mrs. Morton and her daughters when they, too, heard of my protracted residence there.

"We have some very good views of Madeira, I think," said Mr. Morton, carving his venison carefully; "in the large portfolio, I believe, my dear. Miss Lawrence, have you ever noticed those views of Madeira in the large portfolio on the stand in the back drawing-room?"

Mr. Morton never forgot to be polite to his unwelcome guest; ever so often, at our meals, the only time I ever saw him, a sentence complimentary, descriptive, or of inquiry was deliberately prepared, aimed, and discharged at me. It was usually with regard to Lawrence, our one subject in common; but to-day the letter had enlarged his scope. Perhaps if I had remembered the presence of the servants I should have been more guarded in my reply.

"I have never entered your parlors, sir."

"Never entered my parlors!" ejaculated my worthy host. "*Is it possible!* How does that happen?"

"Because I never was asked to, sir," I said, with malice aforethought; not that *I* cared to go, but I knew the storm such a breach of civility would call down on Mrs. Morton and her daughters.

"Is it *possible!*" said Mr. Morton again, in

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the same injured tone I so well remembered in the affair of the carriage; here, again, it was a personal consideration. "I could not have *believed* that in *my house* any one would have reason to complain of such a breach of etiquette!"

"I do not *complain*," I said, catching a half sneer on Miss Morton's face, intimating that I had at last accomplished a settled object; "I beg you distinctly to understand that, nor do I care ever to enter it."

"But I *insist;* really, you will *oblige* me, Miss Lawrence, by making one of my family circle every evening."

He looked around at his wife and daughters as he said this. I knew he had been piqued into saying more than he would have done under any other circumstances; and they knew that he always insisted on any arrangement once made. Hereafter, if Miss Lawrence absented herself at any time, the matter would be especially inquired into, and her presence desired. Hints and innuendoes of expected retirement would not avail them now; if they had been more skilful generals, the day would not have been lost at a single stroke. The rest of the dinner was eaten in silence; when it was over, Miss Morton gathered her ample flounces in her hand, and swept past me out of the dining-room. Mrs. Morton detained me as I rose to follow.

"Miss Lawrence, could you not have explained to Mr. Morton that it was your own wish to live so retired?"

"I should have been obliged to add, and 'by your orders' if I had," I said, coldly, resting my hand upon the richly-carved back of an oaken chair.

She bit her lip, and said no more; it was not the policy or the taste of either to indulge in low-bred recriminations.

By these unguarded words, I lost the luxury of my solitary evenings by my boy's bedside. At first, it was intolerably irksome, not to say humiliating, to join the family-party, though that is scarcely the word; for I always sat aloof, by common consent, and was scarcely ever addressed, or replied in more than mony-syllables when this courtesy was extended to me. Mr. Morton always looked up from his paper and bowed. Mrs. Morton made a show of widening the circle for me if company was present, safe in her knowledge of my invariable custom, which was to take my book or work to the drop-light, which they seldom used, and busy myself with it exclusively through the evening.

It was nothing to me that my introductions were casual and to bores. I set most of their gentlemen visitors down upon that interesting list; they would have been to me at least, with their stereotyped conversation and vapid compliments. I had never seen fashionable young men before; there was something at once pitiful and ludicrous in their whole deportment, dress, carriage, voices, ideas, and the pursuits I heard them discuss. The young lady visitors were not one whit in advance of them; certainly, they never had the faintest intention of bidding these weak-hearted and simple-minded youths "come up higher." It is doubtful whether they were themselves aware that life had any other aim; I think they had not. But this bitter mirth of the evening could by no means fill my empty heart, my unsatisfied, longing life, when the morning sun rose still upon an unchanged, repellant routine, the end of which no hope or passionate desire could foresee.

In looking back upon that period, I see, with the clearness of an humble and repentant spirit, how the blank could have been filled up in gathering treasures of patience, and forbearance, and self-knowledge for that future, whatever it might bring; and how much purer the pleasure of ministering to Rachel's child might have been made! Still, I would not accept the teaching. I began to look forward with feverish impatience to my brother-in-law's return; it must bring some change, I scarcely cared what so my emancipation came with it.

After what I have told you of the general style of Miss Morton's visitors, you will see it was not strange that my attention should be immediately arrested by the introduction of a gentleman bearing quite another stamp, and to whom they paid the unconscious deference of a weak mind to superior will and knowledge. Mr. Morton laid down his paper to welcome the newcomer, who did not seem altogether a stranger, though I was positive that I had never seen him there before. Miss Morton's flutter of satisfaction she did not attempt to disguise, consequently, knowing the besetting sin of parent and child, I set it down in my own mind that he was a person of probable wealth and consequence; still, I greatly wondered how he should be attracted by Miss Morton's shallow graces.

I had an excellent opportunity for observing him; for, of course, *not being* a bore, I was, as usual, left by the side-light to my own reflections. Seen seated in an easy, almost lounging attitude, in the crimson velvet *fauteuil*, his head thrown back to the full blaze of the chandelier, the massive head, bold and rather prominent features, quick, changeful expression, made him an entire contrast to the weak-minded young gentlemen I have before spoken of. He introduced subjects

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entirely foreign to the usual course of conversation, and to Miss Morton's comprehension, I am sure, though she listened with a well-counterfeited interest. I could not help glancing up now and then when some quick suggestion or clever illustration was given out with the prodigality of one to whom thought is familiar; and twice I met his eyes. My glance spoke interest and approval; his second look betrayed curiosity, I thought. This recalled me to myself; and, until his departure, I gave neither sign nor token of consciousness.

He came a second time, a third; and it began to be whispered about in the household that he was addressing Miss Morton. I did not believe it; but unconsciously I set myself to watch them. It was becoming a great pleasure to me to see him enter the parlor in the evening. I found myself looking up with interest when a visitor was shown in, and acknowledged a feeling of disappointment to myself if the evening passed without his appearance. One night, I was certain that I heard him ask an introduction to me. Miss Morton's manner immediately assumed that contemptuous carelessness with which one sets to rights a mistake with regard to the identity of an inferior. I distinctly heard the words: "My cousin's nursery governess," and felt the hot blood rush like a flame to my forehead as I bent still more closely to my work. Evidently, he was satisfied, for the request was not renewed. I should not have cared if it had been one of the moths who were always singing their wings about the flames of Miss Morton and her sister; but I had been persuaded better things of him, and with the mortification of having been placed in the false position of a menial came the disappointment of knowing that what I had looked upon as a superior mind could be influenced by such considerations.

"They are all alike," I said, bitterly, to myself; "he is no better than the rest, with all I have fancied of his mind and heart. Oh, Rachel!" I groaned. "Oh, my dead sister! why were you snatched from me, my only earthly good, all that made life, in its hollow heartlessness, endurable?"

Tears, forcing themselves to my eyes, made a mist of all around me for a moment. I heard some one from the circle, for there were many visitors that evening, come and take the vacant seat opposite to me at the small work-table; when I looked up, he sat there, waiting to speak to me.

"Miss Lawrence," he said, as if we were acquaintances of long standing, "what a store of thoughts and wishes you must be gathering here so silently, night after night."

As he spoke, I had said to myself: "If I were a lady in society, his equal, he would not presume to address me so familiarly. This, then, is to be set to the account of the nursery-governess!"

Had he been Le Roy just then, claiming Miss Morton's attention with his insipidities, I would scarcely have cared a rush, and could have rebuked the impertinence by a single word; but somehow from *him* it grieved more than it angered me.

"I wish I were *dead!*" I said, as I held back my breath, and clasped my hands impotently.

"Miss Lawrence"—he spoke in a tone so deeply respectful and sincere that I could but listen—"you are passing a harsh and a wrong judgment on me, on the world, and yourself. God never gives life without its appointed work and trials; when we wish to escape it, we are not doing the one, or bearing the other as we should."

There was a buzz of conversation all around us; and he spoke in a low, but earnest tone. I did not answer.

"I know the feeling well, better than you imagine; but I have never experienced it without finding, when I came to probe the matter, that I, and not others, was chiefly in fault."

That was all. He had moved away, and was replying to Miss Morton's badinage a moment after; and I went to my room, stricken with a sudden conviction of unthankful murmuring I could neither meet nor silence. I was not suffered to forget it. The next day, a telegraph from New Orleans announced that my brother-in-law had arrived there a dying man. Mr. John Morton hurried away to meet him; a dull quiet settled upon the home. Lawrence alone, unconscious of this second loss, was unaffected by the change, and grew rapidly into intelligent and winning boyhood.

I seldom went to the parlor now. There was no one to notice my absence; and I had not the heart to amuse myself with their frivolities as I once had done. Taking Lawrence with me, I passed hours together in the park, wandering up and down the formal gravel-path, while he played with other children, absorbed in the new speculations that gradually took the place of my aimless rebellion against my heavenly Father's choices for me—loneliness and dependence. Gradually, I ceased to struggle; I acquiesced, if I did not patiently accept them. Twice I met my outward monitor. The first time he bowed; but I do not think he would have spoken but for Lawrence, with whom he had always been a favorite.

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"Are you going to walk with us?" my boy asked, detaining him with the wilful frankness of childhood.

"Not to-day," he said, pleasantly.

Mr. Chalnor could be polite, *kind* to the nursery-governess; but it was not *selon de règle* to walk with her under such open observation. The second time, his hand was extended with a cordial grasp of interest; I thanked him for the kindly pressure in my heart. I was indulging one of my old bitter moods; and it restored me to human fellowship.

Mr. John Morton returned alone; my brother-in-law was dead before he reached New Orleans, dependent upon the kindness of strangers in his last hours, if those excellent women who leave all that they may serve their master in tendance of the sick and the needy, can be called "strangers" to those they minister to for his sake in the name of a common friend.

He had died without a will; I did not think, when Mr. John Morton first told me this, of the significance it would have to my future life. I do not believe—I never have thought that Rachel's husband wilfully neglected to provide for one who had been so long a part of his household, her only relative. I do not think he ever realized his immediate danger; as it was, my boy inherited a well-invested fortune, and I suddenly found myself penniless. Here was an answer to my prayers different from any I had ever looked for. I was independent, it is true, but the independence of absolute poverty, without home or friends.

It was not likely that they would care to retain me in the humblest capacity towards their nephew, one whom they had never liked, and who had never been at any pains to conciliate them. Mr. Morton said as much in our first interview after his return; not that he allowed himself to hint even that my presence was unwelcome, but he took a matter-of-fact, business view of what I was sure were Mrs. Morton's suggestions.

Finally, as if to cut off any lingering expectations, he said, "that, as his brother's health was no longer a detaining consideration, he should probably put into execution a long-talked-of plan, taking his family abroad, business making it advisable that he himself should go."

"And Lawrence?"

"My nephew"—they all avoided my family name as much as possible when speaking of the child—"my nephew is, of course, too young to be benefited by travel. I shall find some safe, quiet country boarding-place for him. He needs physical stamina; it will be decidedly the best thing for him."

I went back to my room, no longer mine now that the sentence had gone forth. I had cast God's remaining blessings, shelter, the supply of outward needs, leisure, my boy's dear presence, unthankfully behind me when my sister was taken; now, he claimed these gifts, so despised and slighted. I could but acknowledge it was just. Now, indeed, I did not murmur; but my punishment seemed greater than I could bear!

I had been sitting many hours with my face bent down into my hands, my mind a chaos of impossible plans, useless regrets, forebodings of the black future, on which a faint glimmering of the good and wise intent of these many strokes was the only light. Lawrence had gone out with the family early in the day, their errand new and more expensive mournings; so, when this solitude was intruded on by a summons to the parlor, I thought at first the servant could but be mistaken.

"Miss Lawrence the gentleman asked for; I am certain," the girl acting in Edward's stead repeated, so I followed her down stairs, wondering, but not guessing who my visitor might be I should have known. Who but Mr. Chalnor, of all who had met me there, would care to offer condolence at my new loss? Still, even when he came forward, I thought the girl had been mistaken, and said—

"I am sorry; the ladies are out."

"I am not," he answered, with a smile; and then the grave, sweet expression that perhaps I liked better still came to his eyes, and trembled most like a smile around his mouth.

"But, lest they should be in, and so break in upon us, pardon my abruptness. I have come to offer you what they never have supplied, a home."

Up to the last second, I thought friendly condolence, made customary by this world of forms, was his object. Even when he paused, I did not comprehend his meaning, though it flashed across my mind that, being the future husband of Miss Morton, they had told him of my forlorn position, and he had come to offer the nursery-governess another *situation*.

"I know I am abrupt," said Mr. Chalnor, in the pause which followed; "but the peculiarity of your unprotected position must be my excuse. You may say that you do not know your own heart. I do no tthink you do; yet I can but hope that, when you come to 'try and examine it,' you will find there sufficient trust—may I

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say love?—to make you give yourself to me as *my wife.*"

There was no mistaking him now; still, my lips were sealed. I could not even look up. You can understand it—how, lifted suddenly from this region of cold and darkness into a full flood of light and sunshine, my heart and life stood still in swoon.

"You will understand my rashness better when I tell you that Mr. Morton has informed me of the real circumstances of your present position. *I do not presume* upon them, believe me"—and the deep voice trembled a little; "but you cannot blame me that the wish I have long indulged of one day placing you in a more congenial atmosphere suddenly became a resolve."

"If," he said again, more passionately—for my silence might have seemed a rebuke—"if you will *only* love me, and trust me! I need your love, Esther; I have waited patiently for it."

* * * * *

"I have taken passage in the steamer of the 18th," said Mr. John Morton to his wife two weeks after his return from New Orleans.

I started, for the 18th was to be my wedding-day. "It was very soon—too soon," said the old pride of heart. "It is the best—best for both," said love, in a true humility.

"All my arrangements are made except for Lawrence. Ah, good-evening, Mr. Chalnor! I was just speaking of our contemplated residence abroad, and of providing a suitable home for my nephew in the mean time."

"Perhaps I can assist you," said Mr. Chalnor, seating himself near me, though Miss Morton made room for him on the sofa.

"Oh, it is too much to ask of a person so occupied with business," said Mrs. Morton, blandly, pleased nevertheless by this evident interest in family affairs.

"Mr. Chalnor was always *so* obliging," murmured Miss Louisa Morton.

As for me, my heart beat so fast that I wondered every one did not hear it as distinctly as I did.

"We should be greatly obliged to you," said Mr. Morton, rubbing his double eyeglass benevolently with the finest of cambric handkerchiefs. "Anything that you might propose would be certain to meet my views."

"Well, then, suppose you make me his guardian in your absence? Here is my future wife to answer for herself;" and he laid his dear hand on mine with a pressure of encouragement.

I went to his sister's the next day. I had seen her several times before; and she came for me, armed with such earnest persuasions that I suffered myself to act passively in her hands. I found even *dependence* could be sweetened.

It was the evening of our wedding-day. My husband, Lawrence, and I were going to our new home.

"You will not find the luxuries you have lately been accustomed to," said my husband, as the carriage rolled easily onward, "and you know I had little time for preparation; but I shall love you so very much that I shall persuade you to forget the discomforts of sharing a poor lawyer's life, whose connections run far before his income; and for the rest, the modern fashion of furnished houses helped me out of that trouble."

The words grated upon my ear. Hitherto, I had looked forward with intense longing to "our home;" but the greatest sorrow of my life was recalled by them. I sat still in the shelter of his circling arm; but I felt that I was not as grateful as I should have been.

With eyes thus averted, I looked out of the carriage-window. The streets, the houses grew strangely familiar, though I had carefully shunned them in my daily walks. I shut my eyes, so that I should not see my old home as we passed; even then and thus, the pain would have been too great.

But the carriage stopped. I looked up to see an open door, to find *my home* unchanged, every remembered object, trifling keepsakes, books, pictures, in the very same position as of old. I looked up into my husband's eyes as his arm again encircled me.

"This is the 18th, our wedding-day, Esther. One year ago this very day, I led you across the threshold, my poor girl. How my heart ached for you! I vowed to myself that, if you could love me as you had loved your sister—do you remember checking Eleanor, my brother's wife, in the room above your sister's room?—I would not rest until I had restored to you all that I saw was so dear."

"It was you," I said, thrilled by a remembered cadence I had *felt*, but never recognized before. "It was your *brother's* wife—I thought it was her husband. It was me, then, at the beginning that you came to seek?"

Rachel, my own true sister, thou knowest that I am not less a mother to thy child because my baby is lying in this cradle; and happiness has come into my heart as the sunshine streams into this upper room where I write! Oh, my ministering angel! unseen, yet ever present, thou knowest that I have set up no idols, dear as they are to me—my husband and child—in the home restored to me by my heavenly Father!

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